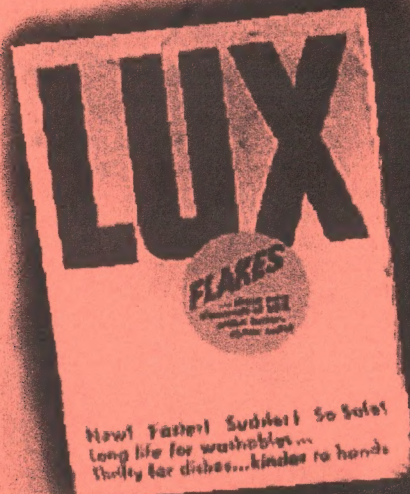


Issue 7: Spring 1999

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DARK SHADOWS JOURNAL



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**"The special effects would receive
more rehearsal time than the actors!"**

Louis Edmonds recalls his Dark Shadows days

Jonathan Frid, Marie Wallace and Stephen Mark Rainey Interviewed,
1897, Grayson Hall and Lara Parker writes about *Angélique's Descent*

DARK SHADOWS

JOURNAL

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Count Petofi was now on his knees begging for mercy. "For the final time, child," he begged, "I am not Santa Claus!"

Editorial

Last year, as part of my laughable effort to amass a comprehensive set of *Dark Shadows* videotapes, I decided that the time had come to purchase a tape from the 140s, which for the initiated will provoke knowing sighs and sympathy. For the benefit of the uninitiated, those volumes bring viewers into the story of the dreaded Leviathans — whom most of fandom would have us believe were reviled far more for their mind-crushing banality than any devious agenda to usurp mankind.

Well, I'd bought it, and could always let it gather dust, as it did for several weeks. You see, for many years, fans have educated one another to believe that the Leviathan sequence was an appalling yawn-fest that set *Dark Shadows* rolling downhill towards cancellation. It's one of the great fan myths, up there with such classics as the tale that Julia Hoffman's gender was inspired by a typing error. Well, one rainy afternoon, I eventually did watch volume 143 and I can now exclusively reveal that fandom was wrong! Like most of the show's episodes, volume 143 is never less than campy fun and often much more. Yet, until I actually watched its episodes, albeit by default, I'd have probably derided Jeb and his cronies as much as anyone else.

Fans today do not experience the folklore of the seventies and eighties. Gone are the days when the privileged few could proudly tell of watching the early episodes, omitted from repeats; when minor bloopers could be spun into Chinese whisper inspired tales of farce and misadventure. Videotapes and regular broadcast have made 1,225 episodes become a surprisingly finite commodity. It's hard to believe that only a year's worth of episodes remain unseen in England, so enjoy every minute of it. We no longer have to rely on second-hand opinion to form judgements on the show. So give the Leviathans the benefit of the doubt; get a tape featuring Betsy Durkin! It's wonderful to have discovered something special within a storyline that I'd never had any interest in. *Dark Shadows* has many little surprises hidden away like this, so don't write a story off because someone else has. That's what we're trying to do in the *Journal* — celebrate what was wonderful about every show, rather than concentrating on the traditional highlights.

We've also increased our page count again, and I think that 1999 is going to be our most exciting year yet, with some wonderful articles to come. With more page increases and innovation due in the coming months, we hope to make the *Journal* the best way to enjoy *Dark Shadows*!

Stuart Manning

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The Collinsport Star Dispatches

Back on TV, but for how much longer in Britain?

After a year-long absence from US television screens, *Dark Shadows* returned to the Sci-Fi Channel USA on January 4, with two episodes broadcast every weekday. For this screening, Sci-Fi elected not to repeat the show's early episodes, instead starting with episode 189. The beginning of the series may be re-screened once they reach the end of the broadcast run, though this remains unconfirmed.

Meanwhile, the European arm of the Sci-Fi Channel, following its take-over by an independent company, has been renamed Sci-Fi, receiving an image overhaul. The organisation is no longer a part of the US broadcasters, who could in theory set up a rival channel of their own. Many staff changes have taken place in recent months and a new head of programming has been appointed.

Sci-Fi continues to screen the original *Dark Shadows* in two different formats. The weekday screenings at 11.00am feature new episodes from 1971 storylines. This timeslot is only available to cable viewers, who can also catch an additional two episodes at 3.00am, seven days a week. These are repeats of previously-screened episodes, currently focusing on the Leviathan story. During recent months, the late-night repeats were discontinued after service provider Sky wrongly promised the broadcast time to the Adult Channel, for which they eventually issued a public apology. Sci-Fi's existing contract to screen *Dark Shadows* expires in November 1999. At present, no formal negotiations have taken place concerning contract renewal. Speaking on behalf of their programming department, Max Taylor commented: "At present, we plan to finish the show in November. It is possible that we may renegotiate, though no decision has been taken yet. We do not foresee ourselves repeating the series immediately. It's an expensive show in that we have to buy many hours, with limited opportunities for repeats." However, he does reassure fans that: "We will ensure that the entire series is screened."

The present plan is that by increasing the late-night screenings to two episodes per night, it will allow them to overtake the daytime broadcasts, concluding the entire *Dark Shadows* archive. There may be specials for the show in the coming months, though this remains unconfirmed.

It is now vital that fans show their support of the show. Please write polite letters, thanking Sci-Fi for screening the show, expressing a desire to see it continue. Send your letters to: Programming Department, Sci-Fi, 77 Charlotte Street, London, W1P 2DD.



◆ The 1999 *Dark Shadows* Festival will take place on August 21-22 at the World Trade Centre Marriott, New York City, with a trip to the Lyndhurst estate on August 20. Guests include Nancy Barrett, John Karlen, Diana Millay, Lara Parker, Dennis Patrick, Chris Pennock, Kathryn Leigh Scott, David Selby, James Storm, Marie Wallace and others. For more information, write to: *Dark Shadows Festival*, PO Box 92, Maplewood, NJ 07040, USA, including return postage.

◆ Harper-Collins have confirmed that their second *Dark Shadows* novel *Dreams of the Dark* will debut before the end of the year. Written by Stephen Mark Rainey and Elizabeth Massie, it charts the story of a vampire from the Civil War era named Thomas Rathburn (see page 20). The company's first novel, Lara Parker's *Angélique's Descent*, reached number 15 on Ingram's chart of Top 50 Most Requested Horror Titles and was recently reprinted.

◆ Pomegranate Press, Ltd. are producing a limited edition book *In and Out of the Shadows*, devoted to the career of David Selby to raise funds for the university of West Virginia, which includes personal stories and rare photographs. Signed copies of Kathryn Leigh Scott's *The Bunny Years* are available from the Book Club Shop, 45/46 Poland Street, London.

◆ MPI Home Video will release a *Dark Shadows* DVD later this year, featuring series highlights and interviews, along with the original commercial film for the *Barnabas Collins Board Game*, which was thought lost until a copy was recently recovered by fans. The *Dark Shadows Video Scrapbook* will be an accompanying VHS release, featuring highlights from the DVD.

It is not the label of soap opera that fans resent, but the fact that it almost immediately robbed *Dark Shadows* of anything approximating widespread critical acclaim.

the systematic bastardisation it had suffered during successive adaptations, being relegated to a *Dark Shadows* 'B' plot maybe is nowhere near as undignified as one might initially imagine. Similarly, it is difficult to look at the early Barnabas episodes without finding the distinct visual and dramatic flavour of Universal's horror offerings. However, to look upon the series in this way is perhaps missing the point: What the soap opera format did was to decrease the audience expectations of the show. To the technically poor and unsophisticated world of daytime television, what might have appeared unoriginal and derivative elsewhere was made groundbreaking and original.

Indeed, one of the most favoured elements of the show from a fan perspective is its sheer sense of ambition, especially in the field of special effects. In the instances of episodes heavily reliant on such gimmicks, the show in turn often demands a greater level of interest from the audience, simply to sustain the narrative on any level—such was the inadequate nature of many of the results. Indeed, on a show where the entire production process was so unwittingly deconstructed throughout, in the form of bloopers and gaffes, if it were not for the audience selectively rejecting and reassembling a whole from disparate sources of information, the drama would cease to exist.

Whilst this may sound like a criticism, these short-

comings ultimately fostered a greater level of viewer involvement in the show—a level of interaction which could only have taken place within the daytime arena. The fact that the special effects were often a contradiction in terms was not the cardinal issue—to assume so is to overlook the true intention of the programme makers. Instead, on the paltry resources available, the *Dark Shadows* production team could only hope to plant the seed of the drama within the minds of the viewers. It was then the responsibility of the audience to mine this material for the relevant information.

Of course, when viewed in this context, the soap opera format was something of a mixed blessing for *Dark Shadows* as a creative concept. Whilst it allowed the show to shine in a way that was inconceivable elsewhere, its limitations undoubtedly prevented it from any chance of ever reaching its full potential. In a medium where the emphasis was placed firmly on high-quota production, *Dark Shadows* was very much ahead of its time, sadly to a degree which frequently robbed its cast and production staff of any feeling of personal satisfaction. With nearly two hours of original material required every week, with special effects and complex set-ups required throughout, the creative vision of the show was ultimately deeply compromised and undermined by such limitations, even though they have found a certain retrospective notoriety in cult television folklore.

Sadly the modern day convention for stripped television repeats has all but destroyed *Dark Shadows* soap opera status. The concept of the series as an epic narrative can no longer exist. We are now deprived of the excitement of an unfolding story, which could change at any time. Thanks to

reference books and magazines such as this, most viewers of the show watch it with a proliferation of incidental knowledge and trivia concerning both the storylines and the processes used to realise the actual episodes. Most fans of today will know that they will eventually encounter a flashback to 1795, and that a year or so later there will be a similar excursion to 1897.

Few viewers today will experience the surprise of finding Victoria Winters thrust back into an entirely different world, with the cast essaying a variety of new roles. Ironically, the convention of recasting performers into new roles, surely one of the most unusual aspects of *Dark Shadows*, has been left as a novelty device, rather than one of any genuine surprise.

Whereas the original generation of viewers would have squinted at their television screens, in an attempt to decide if Count Petofi was the man who played Elliot Stokes, today they can just thumb through their copy of the *Dark Shadows Almanac* and obtain a full listing of Thayer David's credits on the show, including a firm idea of when they can expect each to appear. However, when such information is laid out before one in black and white like that, it spoils the fun somewhat, doesn't it?

The very essence of soap opera is the emphasis

on the development of an unfolding story. Purely by virtue of the fact that the show is no longer in production, the soap opera status of *Dark Shadows* is already partially lost. No viewer today, can hope to approach the show in complete isolation, and thus can never hope to experience the show in the manner in which it was intended to be seen. No viewer today will be unaware that Barnabas is really a vampire, or that the series jumps around in various time zones. The experience of watching those two plot twists in the show unfold is gone forever.

Whilst many fans look upon the idea of *Dark Shadows* revelling in its soap opera trappings derisively, perhaps we should start to look at the benefits the format brought to the show and lament the fact that the broadcast convention of today has finally achieved what Dan Curtis never could, in spite of his persistent attempts.

The suspense is now undermined, the intrigue diluted. *Dark Shadows* can no longer be described as a soap opera in any true sense, and sadly, when one considers what an intrinsic part the soap opera format played in the success of the show, few could really agree that its distancing from the format has offered it a reward of any sort.

Oh, to be uninitiated and ignorant once again... ♦

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The Secret

Part One

by Emily Klaczak

Elizabeth Collins put her purse on the table and hung her coat in the closet. Looking around the room, she noted that the furniture was plain but well made and the wallpaper and draperies were pleasant enough. A short rap on the door was followed by a motherly looking woman in her early fifties carrying a large suitcase and another smaller suitcase, both of which she set at the foot of the bed.

"We serve dinner at six—but I'll bring you up a snack. You must be tired after your journey."

"I would like that, thank you," replied Elizabeth, and the woman smiled and left the room. A half-minute later, a ten-year-old boy came in, carrying a small, leather-bound trunk. "Where do you want this, Mrs. Perkins?" he asked.

"Please put it on the desk," said Elizabeth, reaching into her purse and producing a coin, which she placed in the boy's hand. He beamed in delight, thanked her and left the room.

She had just changed into a cotton robe when the woman brought up a tray with a large glass of milk and a sandwich. "Ham salad—hope you like it! And we're having meatloaf for dinner."

"That sounds delicious, Mrs. Turner. I haven't had meatloaf in ages," said Elizabeth, quietly. Mrs. Turner put the tray down on the night table and left the room, closing the door softly behind her.

Elizabeth was very hungry, having eaten only a light breakfast. After finishing the sandwich and milk, she took the pillow from the head of the bed and placed it at the foot. Getting into bed, she sat against the headboard with her feet up on the pillow. Crossing her hands over her swollen abdomen, she began to review the sequence of events that had brought her to this boarding house in a small town in New Jersey.

She never thought that she would get pregnant. They only happened to teenage girls who didn't know the facts of life. But when she was sure that she was going to have a baby, she made an appointment with a doctor in Portland. He understood her predicament. He suggested that she find a place in a small town where she could stay anonymously until a few weeks before the baby was due. Then he would arrange for her to be admitted to a New York hospital. The baby would be placed in a foundling home. And when she was well

enough to travel, she could return home. The doctor's sister lived in New Jersey and could assist Elizabeth in finding a place to stay.

She had to tell Roger—how could she explain an absence of five to six months? When she told him the news, he immediately turned bright red. He'd never imagined his sister in a romantic situation, nor had wanted to. Then he drew her close and hugged her while she cried on his shoulder. "I'll do whatever I can to help you," he had said. She asked only that he keep Paul Stoddard in the dark as to her whereabouts, she felt that her future was with him.

She had told the owner of the boarding house that her husband had been killed in a fire that destroyed their home and that she was waiting for their child to be born before travelling South to stay with her parents. She felt that such a grim story would discourage the landlady from asking too many personal questions.

Elizabeth drifted off to sleep and woke at five. Time to dress for dinner, she thought, thinking of her routine at Collinwood. As she sat up, she looked at the trunk on the desk and wondered, am I the first Collins female to find myself in such a predicament?

According to the official family history, she was. According to the family history, all Collinses married people that their parents approved of, had wonderful obedient children, marital bliss, and died peacefully in their beds. Perhaps the contents of the trunk would show otherwise.

For the trunk contained the personal handwritten diaries of the Collins family members, covering almost two hundred years. Elizabeth needed a project to occupy her during her confinement. She would transcribe those handwritten documents—a project that her mother had intended to do, but had never found the time to. Perhaps someday they would be published. For now, it was something to pass the time with. And who knew what secrets those faded pages would reveal?

She began with the diaries of Naomi Collins, who lived during the late 1700s. She had always identified with her, since she resembled the portrait of Naomi that hung in Collinwood. She wondered what it would be like to be a great lady during that historical era. She thought it

would be very romantic to wear beautiful gowns every day and be waited on by servants. But it turned out that there was little romance in poor Naomi's life. Her marriage was very unhappy. She had joy with her son Barnabas and daughter Sarah, but little with her husband Joshua. Elizabeth suspected that Naomi had a drinking problem because days would pass with no diary entries and some of the pages were written in an unsteady hand that made little sense. But Elizabeth found the descriptions of everyday life in Colonial times to be interesting and she kept going, carefully typing up each page on the portable typewriter that she had brought with her.

When she reached the diary for the year 1795 she grew uneasy. Naomi would be dead within the year, as well as her brother-in-law Jeremiah, his wife, Josette, and Naomi's young daughter, Sarah. And her son Barnabas would have left the country, never to be heard from again.

The diary started out as the others, an account of daily life, nothing extraordinary. Naomi grew happier as the year progressed, eagerly anticipating the wedding of Barnabas and Josette DuPres.

Barnabas and Josette? But Josette had married Jeremiah, Barnabas' uncle!

She read on to read that Josette eloped with Jeremiah. And then Naomi wrote:

There has been an accident and Jeremiah is dead. Poor Barnabas! How will he live with the pain of having caused his uncle's death? I grieve for him.

She remembered that Jeremiah had been accidentally killed in an accident with his own gun. What had Barnabas to do with that? The writing in this entry was very shaky and Elizabeth wondered if Naomi had been drinking when she wrote it. The poor woman, to have found consolation in alcohol, and not her husband.

She read on and learned that Barnabas married Josette's maidservant, a woman named Angélique. Apparently Naomi had approved of the union, because she stated that she had given Barnabas and Angélique the deed to the original Collins home over the objections of her husband—"Good for you!" Elizabeth exulted silently. Later, Naomi wrote of how she helped Angélique find a dress for the wedding and given her a brooch to wear:

She is a lovely and well mannered girl, wrote Naomi. I hope that she helps Barnabas to forget about Josette.

But soon after the wedding, Barnabas left for England. Why did Naomi write about him as though he had died?

I will never see my son again! Joshua tries to console me in his own way... he reminds me that I still have Sarah and that Daniel—a young cousin, Elizabeth remembered—will carry on the family name. But why, dear God, did you take him from me?

I have left my jewels with him. A foolish gesture, I know, and Joshua thinks me mad, or at least drunk. But I wanted to leave with him something that is precious to me.

Elizabeth sat back and pondered these little mysteries: Why hide the death of their eldest child and heir? Had he died of the plague, or in a duel? Perhaps he'd run off with Josette. Scandalous—but she was a widow now and surely the Collins family could pay the servant Angélique enough money to go away. No. She remembered that Josette had committed suicide by jumping off Widow's Hill. Mourning the death of Jeremiah? Or of Barnabas?

Elizabeth grew depressed. But there were only a few pages left to read and she might as well finish it.

The final entry simply read:

My dear Sarah is dead.

Closing the diary, Elizabeth wept bitterly for Naomi and her children. She put the book back in the trunk and put the trunk in a corner and did not look at it for many weeks.

Elizabeth spent her days reading mystery novels, but one could only read for so many hours a day. Mrs. Turner taught her how to crochet and she began making a baby blanket. It was something to do while listening to the radio, but it was not engrossing enough.

It was time to get back to the diaries.

This time she selected the diary of Edith Collins, who lived in the nineteenth century and died in 1897. She was Elizabeth great-great grandmother. She chose Edith's diaries to transcribe because she knew from her parents that Edith had lived a long happy life and had died in her bed at the age of ninety. After reading the diary of Naomi Collins, Elizabeth wanted to read about someone who offered a little less tragedy.

Edith Collins was an enthusiastic writer who had opinions on everything, from politics to the

Guess Who? Big Lou!

Louis Edmonds was one of the only performers to last throughout *Dark Shadows*' entire network run.

Guy Haines recently spoke to the actor at his home in Long Island, NY.

For Louis Edmonds, performing had very much been an intrinsic part of his life from the beginning. As a child, he had found an unusual way of indulging this interest: "I think that my interest in acting began through the church—the Church of Baton Rouge, Louisiana. I had quite a voice, and so they had me sing in the choir there. I did solo work, and then I led the procession, with the great crucifix. And suddenly it occurred to me, many years later, when ABC [Television] sent me down to Baton Rouge for a publicity tour that it had been the beginning of it all, because I was very much a performer in the church: The congregation was the audience, the crucifixes were like costume. Everything there was translatable into theatre, and so that's where I think it started, completely unknowingly."

Whilst the church would provide Edmonds with his own personal theatre during his formative years, he would not make the transition to acting proper until reaching further education: "My earliest roles came to me when I was in college—I had wonderful roles. I played Mettruccio in *Taming of the Shrew*, Edgar in *King Lear*. There was also this marvellous play that no one's ever heard of called *Getting Married* by Bernard Shaw, and I played St. John Hopkins, which was a wonderful role, though all the parts are good in that play. I've certainly had my share of good luck with parts."

From there, Louis graduated into professional theatre, and would eventually move from there into the world of television, though not in his own perceptions: "Did I move into television? [laughs] You never are aware of anything that's going on whilst you are in the process of doing it. None of us were aware that we were moving into television. We [theatre actors] were available talent, and they began to use us in the Sunday morning Biblical stories. As it became

more rewarding, they [the producers] would adapt American and English writers to film, and that's when it began to take off, and we would float gently to the top from time-to-time. But we didn't move into it—it absorbed us, I suppose you might say."

Louis' first major television role came with Roger Collins, the dour Collins patriarch on *Dark Shadows*, firmly establishing him as a television actor. "Dan Curtis offered it [the role] to me, and I took it. I think we auditioned in those days, and he chose me, and so I moved into *Dark Shadows*. When approaching it, it initially occurred to me that, purely for my own benefit, we were making a movie. And I was playing at being a movie star with dear Joan Bennett, and

"When approaching the show, it occurred to me that we were making a movie. I had fun thinking of myself as a movie star on *Dark Shadows*"

we became great friends. And I had fun thinking of myself as a movie star in *Dark Shadows*. I hope I'm not letting out a secret by saying that."

With his polished voice and striking features, Louis Edmonds made a superb addition to the cast of *Dark Shadows*. His memorable interpretation of the role proved popular with the viewers and production staff alike, so much so that initial plans to kill Roger off were hastily abandoned. That particular piece of trivia was apparently unknown by Louis. "No, I didn't know that, actually. I'm pretty glad that it didn't come to pass because I got four-and-a-half years out of it!"

Less than a year into its run, the show had evolved somewhat beyond the timid murder mystery originally conceived into a quirky show laden with supernatural touches, a move which proved as surprising to the cast as the viewers: "It was a new experience, and I realised that we were taking off in a different direction. The only problem with it, as it was, was that they began to concentrate on creating these illusions; they might cut your hand off, and then you'd see a hand floating by, or things like that. That took time to set up, in terms of the cameras, and it turned out camera people were getting more rehearsal time than the actors were. So we [the actors] began to get a little

snotty about that, but we remedied it by going up to our dressing rooms and cueing each other, running through the scenes."

Battling with the technical staff was not the only war the actors fought. In 1967, when a series of union strikes threatened to de-rail the *Dark Shadows* ghost-train, the cast defied their union and crossed picket lines to attend tapings: "I'd actually forgotten about those," Louis admits. "We were asked to cross the picket lines, and we had seen everyone else do it, from coal miners to laundry ladies, so we joined in did it to. And we were told that we would be fined, though our attitude was very much, 'Shoot at this head, shoot at this old grey head, but spare your country's flag!' And subsequently we actually were not fined, so it was a happy ending for us, after all."

Having worked with such a varied range of co-stars on the show, did Louis think that any of them influenced his acting style? "We really didn't have time on the show to be influenced by other people, though I suppose that anyone who learned their lines and gave a good performance I would have respect for. Nancy Barrett certainly did that. She played wonderful, varied parts, much like we all did. We were mostly just a nice family group."

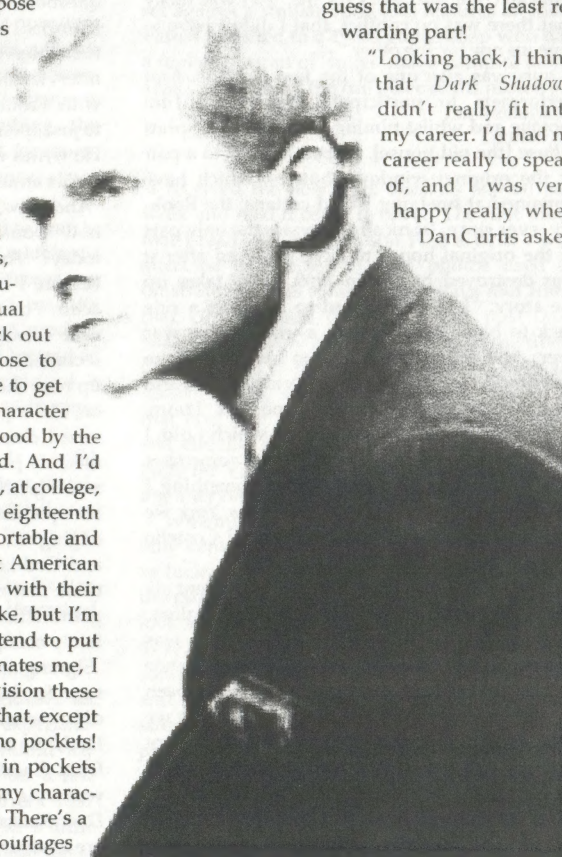
Varied, wonderful parts was one of the advantages *Dark Shadows* offered an actor over most other soap operas, and Louis was afforded the opportunity to create his own cast of individual characters: "Joshua and Edward stick out mainly in my mind. Roger was close to playing my own age, but it was nice to get an opportunity to try my hand at character acting, but the storylines were so good by the time we got to Joshua and Edward. And I'd been trained in a lot of costume work, at college, so it came naturally to me to do this eighteenth century business. But was also comfortable and at ease in the costumes, when most American actors don't even know what to do with their hands. I don't know what I sound like, but I'm an American actor. But they always tend to put their hands in their pockets; it fascinates me, I think it's why I see so much on television these days! But American actors seem like that, except for the cowboys, because they have no pockets! They even began to put their hands in pockets where there were none! I think that my characters came from the scripts, primarily. There's a lizard we have in the South that camouflages

itself by taking on the colours of the piece of wood or leaf it happens to be on, and that, in a sense, is what part of acting is. You change colour, you find a different voice, assume a different stance, and you can fool a lot of people by doing that."

On reflection, what did Louis think was the most rewarding aspect of working on *Dark Shadows*? "The most rewarding thing *Dark Shadows* gave me was money [laughs]. And then there were the friendships I had with the company. I was very close to Joan Bennett, and I enjoyed working with Jonathan Frid, who played Barnabas, and little Nancy [Barrett], whom I still see from time-to-time."

By comparison, was there anything unrewarding about the show? "I can't really honestly say that anything about it was unrewarding, because it gave me five years of employment, and a salary unlike anything I'd ever had before. Nor had I had five years of continual employment, so when that stopped I guess that was the least rewarding part!"

"Looking back, I think that *Dark Shadows* didn't really fit into my career. I'd had no career really to speak of, and I was very happy really when Dan Curtis asked





"Acting is a form of camouflage; you change your colour, find a different voice, assume a different stance"

me to be in it. I said 'I'd love to, but there's only one hitch. I've committed myself to making a movie in Jamaica, *Come Spy With Me*.' Dan Curtis said 'What are the filming

dates?' I told him and he replied, 'Perfect, then you can come and work for me.' So I was lucky that there was no conflict, that I didn't have to give up one for the other."

Louis was also one of the few *Dark Shadows* performers to participate in location film footage and whilst filming at the derelict Spratt House [the old house], helped himself to a pair of the original window shutters, which have remained at his Long Island cottage, the Rookery, ever since. Ironically, they are the only part of the original house to have survived after it was destroyed by fire in 1969. Louis takes up the story: "I was promised to be given a ride back to New York as soon as my filming was over. And my time came to go back, and there was no ride for me, and I was livid and was also tired. I spotted these shutters and said 'Hmm, this is worth waiting around for,' which I did. I just lifted them off the hinges, I don't remember where I put them, in some truck or something. I got them to New York, and from New York we got them out here. [Producer Robert] Costello calls it *Dark Shutters*!"

In early 1970, the *Dark Shadows* cast spent six weeks making their first bid at cinematic glory, as Louis elaborates: "*House of Dark Shadows* was different. We actually *were* making a movie then, and as I said earlier, it had always been my way to work like in a movie, and there we were, making our movie, though it wasn't very different from the series. And as soon as we got the film out of the way, it was back to working on the soap opera."

After *Dark Shadows* ended its network run,

Louis returned to freelance acting, before landing his second soap opera success as the character of Langley Wallingford in the long-running drama *All My Children*: "On *All My Children* I was very happy, deliciously happy. I loved the work and when I was first on they had wonderful situations for me, and there were many splendid people within that company that I'm still friends with."

Regular work on *All My Children* would keep Louis busy until he entered semi-retirement in the early 1990s, following illness. In 1995, he collaborated with writer Craig Hamrick on his biography *Big Lou*, eventually published in 1996. The finished book was surprisingly honest and revealing, spanning several printings. "The book I can't really speak for, I think. That question should really be answered by Craig Hamrick, who wrote and organised it all. He first interviewed me, and then got the idea of interviewing various people whom I'd worked with. From my point of view it was easy for me to just spout ideas and have him put it together. He writes well, and I think that for most people it was amusing."

And now, living a happy life in retirement, how would Louis Edmonds describe himself today? "An old fool, now [laughs]! Not so earlier on, I certainly hope! Today, I'm a retired actor. I'm lucky because here at my home I'm near enough to the city, yet I'm in a fairly secluded area out here in Long Island. I grew up near the earth—I used to ride horses and so on, and my grandfather was a real farmer, who raised cherry and apple orchards. Every Summer, my parents would send me up there, and it was a great education about life and I learned a lot up there. I think that now we're acknowledging the genetic transference of hair colour and God-knows-what, I really am beginning to think that my love of the garden came from my grandfather. I think that I inherited that. It certainly occupies most of my time nowadays."

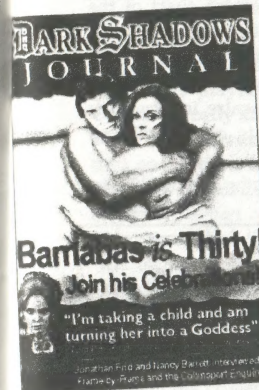
Signing off, does Louis have any special message for his fans in the United Kingdom? "I didn't even realise it was even available in England," he admits. "I actually have a few friends from London, whom I've known for many years. As for the fans, I hope that they enjoy *Dark Shadows* and are amused by it, just as we are by their exports." ♦

Journal Mailbag

Send your letters to:
76 Stanley Road,
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POTENT ATMOSPHERE

Having read issue six of our *Journal*, two points come to mind: Firstly, the cover picture was hilarious! I rarely laugh spontaneously, but the wickedly humorous study of the lovers Barnabas and Julia made me immediately ex-



plode with mirth the instant I removed the magazine from its envelope—I still grin every time I think of it.

On a more sombre note, my second point concerns Alan Hayes' question of what makes the show so continuously enjoyable? For those of us who enjoy fantasy drama in general, *Dark Shadows* is a pure concentrate of gothic and the occult—it focuses relentlessly on what the genre is all about, combing the

eerie, the weird, creepy houses and locations, with strange occurrences and intense atmospheres in a potent mix.

The sets and costumes are beautiful to watch, and all the characters have charisma and captivate in their own way. The music scores are intense, and the series proceeds at a real life pace, unlike pre-filmed, finely edited productions. It is hardly an *action* series, but instead of giving us breathless, bedazzling excitement it entices us in a charming hypnotic and poetic manner.

Overall, I believe *Dark Shadows* stands as solid entertainment and is for me, a constant recipient of my appreciation and gratitude to all concerned in making it the special show it was and continues to be.

Ken Poulter,
Hemel Hempstead

WORTH THE MONEY!

Having watched *Dark Shadows* religiously for over a year now, I'll also confess to experiencing a childish sense of injustice should my favourite characters be absent even for a few episodes. Additionally I find the current 1897 storyline to some considerable extent a little flat, in relative terms at any rate. Trask seems

far less demonic in 1897 and Laura is too reminiscent of Angélique for my liking. Barnabas is much more ineffectual than the 1795 setting, given the enforced return of his affliction and I prefer Don Briscoe as the laconic Chris Jennings. On the plus side John Karlen is superb as the troubled Carl and Joan Bennett's fluffs are worth the cable fee alone!

Incidentally, I published a novel recently, *Do Pigs Fly?* under the sobriquet James Loomis, a thriller set in central Scotland, which unsurprisingly has yet to find a place alongside Ian Rankin on the shelves but I know that you'll appreciate the sentiment. A subsequent effort set against a similar backcloth features an individual addicted to a 1960s gothic soap who has a replica portrait of 'super-suave vampire Barnabas Collins' over the fire place of his hostelry.

Jim Monaghan,
Edinburgh.

I received the new *Dark Shadows Journal* last week and read it cover to cover. The first thing that I read was the Grayson Hall article. I was attracted by the selection of photos used to illustrate it. I was aware of the plays and films that Grayson had done pre- and post-*Dark Shadows* but knew nothing other than the titles. I cannot wait to read about *Who Are You, Polly Magoo?* Yikes, she looks like a drag queen in that one! The *Enquirer* spoof was hysterical, I still chuckle at *When Boom Mikes Attack!* and *Puffy the Vampire Slayer!* Good fiction, interesting interviews, thanks for another great issue!

I remember when fan-magazines were our only contact with fandom, other than those of us lucky enough to attend the festivals. Prior to the popularity of the Internet, I used to eagerly look forward to receiving my fanzines, not only to read the news about the *Dark Shadows* personnel, but I greatly enjoyed the letters pages and reading the feedback from fans about the strengths and weaknesses of characters and plot development. Nowadays, by logging on to web pages and mail lists, we can read what our fellow fans think of *Dark Shadows* every day. But there is something special about receiving a publication in the mail, holding it in your hand,



reading stories and fan viewpoints in the comfort of an overstuffed chair. I still get excited to see that plain envelope in my mail. The *Journal* has a bit of everything—fiction, interviews, critical analysis, behind-the-scenes stories. Thanks again for all that you do for *Dark Shadows* fandom on your side of the Atlantic.

Emily Klaczak,
Pittsburgh, USA

I loved issue six of the *Dark Shadows Journal*! Finally, someone has created a fun periodical. I really enjoyed the humorous aspects brought to the articles. The article about Grayson Hall was warm and really worked to bring the actress into a new light. After reading the interview with Nancy Barrett, I finally found the courage to write to her and express my sympathies over the loss of her husband.

Sidney J. Dragon,
Kissimmee, USA

AND FINALLY, A WORD FROM...

It was nice to hear from, not only from you, but also of the *Dark Shadows* UK invasion. The copy of your *Journal* was happily received, though it still amazes me that a thirty-year-old show would have such a following—though why shouldn't it? Vampires are after all indestructible, aren't they?

As for me, I retired some years back and have spent my time sailing the eastern coast of the United States in a small English sail-boat.

I spent several happy months in London some years ago while appearing with Elizabeth Taylor at the Victoria Palace Theatre in *The Little Foxes*—I got to know the city quite well and loved every moment of it.

Humbert Allen Astredo,
Clinton, USA



Talking Books

Actress turned author **Lara Parker** writes of the trials and tribulations of charting *Angélique's Descent* for the new range of *Dark Shadows* novels.

I was so immersed in the writing process that now that it is over I can't believe I even did it. It was quite a challenge. The last two months I worked sometimes 16 hour days. It was a totally new medium for me. I would never be so presumptuous as to claim I have begun to master it. I'm sure I made most of the same mistakes all beginning novelists make.

I am pleased with parts of it and other stretches seem too hurried, especially when my story connects with the television show—which is the last hundred pages. The time period of the show which I chose to fictionalise had a great deal of plot structure—many turns and reversals—and I couldn't cover it all adequately. But I couldn't just stop either. I had to go from the time *Angélique* arrived in Collinsport through the 'curse'. I had not

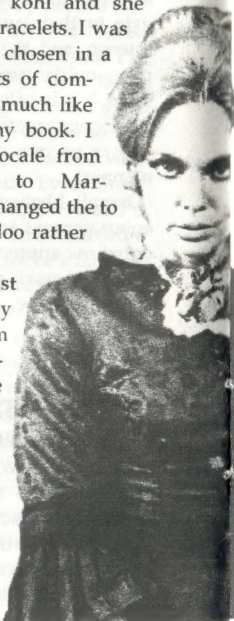
remembered how long and convoluted the plot was until I watched the tapes again. However Harper-Collins had asked for 320 to 350 pages and I was at 519 pages. Therefore I couldn't make it any longer. So for me the last section feels rushed.

I did quite a lot of research on Martinique and life of slaves and sugar plantations in 1790. It was fascinating. I also delved into Voodoo and learned a great deal about the Laos and spells. I chose to make *Angélique* immortal, and the reluctant servant of the devil. So she is fighting her fate. In these ways the story is made richer and has an original slant which meshes with the television show but does not just repeat it.

The opening segment of *Angélique* being chosen as the 'living goddess' I actually saw in Nepal. They have a little girl there in Kathmandu who sits at the second-storey window of a

brick house and stares down on the square. She looked very lonely and unhappy when I saw her. Her eyes were circled with kohl and she wore many bracelets. I was told she was chosen in a gruelling tests of composure, very much like the one in my book. I moved the locale from Kathmandu to Martinique and changed the to religion Voodoo rather than Hindu.

Those are just some of my thoughts. I am thrilled to have been able to do this and I hope the book does well enough for me to be asked to write another novel. ♦



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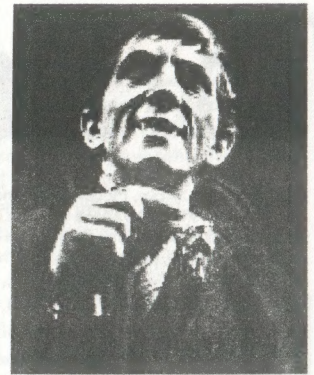
Residents of Collinsport were shocked to discover that local playboy Barnabas Collins is really an evil undead being who terrorised his victims on daytime TV for years.

The foul fanged fiend broadcast his crimes as part of the daytime soap opera "Dark Shadows".

In an exclusive interview, Collins (178) remained ambivalent about his imprisonment: "Some people might think that I made my capture easier by parading my crimes five times a week in half-hour instalments, backed up with a range of affordable tie-in merchandise, though since it was going out on ABC, I thought no-one would notice," he conceded. "I think it was the chat show appearances which really sealed my fate, though I do

feel that the media has misrepresented me. No one seems to want to acknowledge the positive aspects of vampirism, the loveable aspects of my condition. Sadly, all the hacks seem to see is a guy with fangs."

Sheriff George Patterson exclusively told the ENQUIRER about how he cracked the case that has baffled the local police force for two-and-a-half years: "Whilst on a stake-out, my squad car was unfortunate enough to be in a bad NBC reception area. As it was either the option of watching ABC or the forgery raid, I decided that the daytime shows would be a more productive use of my time. After watching the soap opera for three months, I began to have sneaking suspicions



SHAMED! BARNABAS COLLINS: Guy With Fangs

about Mr. Collins, and acted only a few weeks after," he says proudly.

"I hope that this triumph proves once and for all my skill as a law enforcer, and that me buying a 32 inch colour set to celebrate was a justifiable use of the taxpayer's money."

With a hint of regret, Collins concludes: "The saddest thing is that I think this whole vampirism jaunt has pretty much ended my developing career in television, which I think is where we all suffer. That said, I've yet to hear back from Oprah and Jerry Springer's people."

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As Seen on TV

The First Lady

With her roles as Eve, Megan Todd and the deranged Jenny Collins, Marie Wallace was the actress behind some of *Dark Shadows*' most colourful characters, as she recently recalled for two on-line chats.

Marie made her debut on *Dark Shadows* in 1968, in the role of the villainous Eve: "I had never seen *Dark Shadows* or even heard of it. When I found out that I was going to play Eve I was thrilled because she was the most evil lady who ever lived and I love playing evil people!"

She was eager to put to rest one common misconception: "I was not married to *Dark Shadows* writer Art Wallace! Many people see his name in the credits and think we're related in some way, but I never even met him until about five years later, at a friend's house."

When she returned to *Dark Shadows* during the 1897 time period, it was in the role of 'Crazy' Jenny Collins, a character remembered

as much for her storylines as her outrageous hairstyle: "Many people thought it was a wig, but it was not so! I teased my hair within an inch of its life, then I made pin curls all around the top and side of my face. I wore false eyelashes on both the top and bottom of my eyes, which also helped make me look pretty crazy!"

Elaborate hairstyling would also cause Marie a few additional headaches whilst working on the show: "Irene Hamalain was my hairdresser and was absolutely wonderful. However, she was very fussy. As Eve, I was hypnotised, and within one and a half minutes had to change from present time to the 1700s. The way we did that was by putting a wig over my head with two pins. I then had to run across the entire studio to another set, which had candle sconces. I stood in front of them and kept hearing Irene whispering. I wondered why she wouldn't leave me alone and kept ignoring her. Suddenly I heard wild footsteps and it was one of the stagehands running towards me who pulled off my wig because it happened to be on fire! Poor Irene—I was getting mad at her and she was trying to save my life!"

Marie considers her appearances as Jenny to be

some of the best work she did on *Dark Shadows*.

"Admittedly, I got into a very emotional state while playing Jenny. Once I was walking down 9th Avenue after the show, and an acting teacher of mine saw me from a cab, called me the next day, and asked 'Are you alright? You looked like you were in an absolutely crazed state yesterday!' We didn't really discuss it with the writers, but we had the freedom to develop the characters in any way that we wished to. I worked on the emotional parts of Jenny in a very deep way and she affected me very much."

Although Marie left *Dark Shadows* in 1970 for her role in *Somerset*, she did receive offers to return to the show: "Henry Kaplan, one of *Dark*

Shadows directors, kept calling me about it, but we never got as far as discussing the character's name. By then I had already signed my *Somerset* contract and was committed."

When Dan Curtis took *Dark Shadows* to the big

screen, Marie was one of the few regular cast members not to make the transition: "I was asked to do the first movie while I was doing the soap opera *Somerset* [A cameo role was written though was never filmed]. I tried to get Dan Curtis to adjust the film's schedule to fit mine, but he wouldn't do it. He said 'You can't adjust a movie's schedule, but you can a soap opera's schedule.' However, whenever I got a commercial or any other work while I was on *Dark Shadows*, he always said 'You can change that schedule, but you cannot change the schedule of a soap opera!'"

Somerset was Marie's other foray into the world of daytime drama, in which she played the role of India Delaney: "I loved that character—I left *Dark Shadows* to do it. The *Dark Shadows* producers had another character for me to play, but I was so excited about starting a new soap opera that I went on to *Somerset*. Everyone in the cast felt like someone in my family. There was a great deal of love—most enjoyable!"

For one Broadway show, *The Women*, Marie found herself promoted from understudy at the eleventh hour to replace Lanie Kazan. In a career first, the role asked that she dye her red

hair blonde: "I've always had more 'fun' than anyone else whether I was a blonde or a redhead!" she jokes, "But I must say, some old friends didn't recognise me at times! I had lots of fun fooling them. I loved replacing Lanie, because I always wanted to play the part and in fact originally turned down the understudy role, but my agent convinced me to take it because he was certain that I would come to Broadway in the part."

Thirty years on, Marie still thinks of her *Dark Shadows* co-stars with affection: "I keep in touch with many of the *Dark Shadows* cast. Most of them aren't in New York, but Donna Wandrey is, and we do see each other occasionally. Actually, I met her and many of the other cast members at the *Dark Shadows* festivals for the first time, since I never had any scenes with them and our paths didn't cross at the studio."

Although she has not acted extensively in recent years, Marie did appear in a 1993 production of *The Lion in Winter*, in which Jonathan Frid made his directorial debut: "He was marvellous! It was always great fun to work with Jonathan, and working with him for the six week rehearsal period was heaven. Working with David Moore, who's now my dear friend, and who played the role of Richard, my character's son, in that production was also wonderful. The whole production was just sheer joy!"

In recent years, Marie has established herself as a professional photographer, winning several awards and photographing several famous faces, as she elaborated: "It was very thrilling to meet Gerry Adams, hear him speak and to photograph him. It was very exciting. He was very impressive and I was really quite honoured because I was the only photographer allowed to get near him. All the others, including *The New York Times*, had to stand behind the barriers at a distance. In fact, his bodyguard asked me if I wanted a picture him. I said yes, and treasure that picture. Hillary Clinton was a lovely woman. We had a funny experience—we got stuck on an elevator with six secret service men! The secret service men took it very seriously but Hillary was calm and joked about it. Luckily, within a minute we were moving again."

Whilst it has occupied her most in recent years, photography had been a hobby of Marie's for some time: "Twenty years ago, when I was doing a show with Jackie Gleason, *Sly Fox*. I toured all over the US, and we'd have opening nights every 3 weeks. I had a little Kodak and it was so embarrassing—I'd say 'Jackie, smile!' and then it took five minutes for the flash to go

off or it just malfunctioned in some way. I was always so embarrassed and at night I would talk to my boyfriend in New York City who had worked his way through law school as a photographer and sure enough, on my birthday, in Chicago, he brought me my first professional-quality camera, a Konica. From then on, I got really serious about photography, and taught myself darkroom technique and began studying properly with some teachers both in New York and California."

Charitable concerns have been an active interest for Marie in recent years: "I'm constantly involved in a variety of charities there. The big one I'm helping with in September is *Race for the Cure*, which helps the fight against breast cancer. I'm a co-captain of the Presbyterian Hospital's team and last year I recruited 1251 people, which helped the hospital win a \$10,000 grant to give free mammograms to women without insurance."

Whilst acting is not an everyday interest for her nowadays, Marie still maintains a keen interest in the stage, confessing a preference for the one-person show format that Jonathan earlier used to great success: "I think a one-person show is the way to go these days. Some might say that I am a natural storyteller because I'm Irish! Though with my heavy photography schedule, I just don't have any time, though who knows what the future will bring!" ♦



Damned Dreams!

Author **Stephen Mark Rainey** discusses his upcoming *Dark Shadows* novel, *Dreams of the Dark*.

Horror writing had always seemed like an ideal occupation for the co-writer of *Dark Shadows: Dreams of the Dark*, Stephen Mark Rainey. "I started writing short stories, or something akin to them, when I was in middle school, and one of them was a little *Dark Shadows* story, which I turned in for English Class and got an A. I guess that inspired me to write more things, virtually all of them 'scary', since I've always had a fondness for horror. In college, I wrote a horror story for a literary contest, which I won and actually got paid (more than I got for many stories I sold further down the road!), and it was published in the college literary magazine. After that, I sporadically cranked out a little tale from time to time, most of them dreadful beyond words, but after I graduated University of Georgia in 1981, I decided to really do some serious 'authoring'. I'd gotten into the works of H.P. Lovecraft in my last year of college, and it had really rekindled my interest in horror fiction. So, over the next couple of years, I wrote a sprawling novel which was part *Godzilla* and part *Cthulhu Mythos*. It was a very ambitious project at the time, and I can't recall ever having a better time writing. In reality, of course, it was dreadful beyond words, and looking at it now, I alternately



cringe and get excited to think how much it meant to me then.

"Several years later, when I was living in Chicago, I started discovering numerous other horror authors because the horror market was booming in the early to mid 1980s. I began writing and submitting my stories to everything from the biggest pro magazines to the weeniest of trash-rags, and finally began to get my stuff accepted, at first mostly in the little rags. Because I worked at a company that manufactured typographic systems, and I had access to them, I decided to start my own magazine, in the hopes of producing something better than most of the crap that was floating around in the marketplace. And thus *Deathrealm* was born, which ended up lasting for over 10 years, and featured everyone from aspiring first-timers to the most established professionals in the business. *Deathrealm's* production values for a small press publication were unequalled at that time, because no one else had access to the kind of equipment I did. So, that was the first thing to work in its favour; it immediately caught people's attention. The fiction and artwork I received from contributors was consistently of exceptionally high calibre. After a time, *Deathrealm* gained international distribution, winning awards for excellence.

"Not everyone reading a *Dark Shadows* novel will be a fan of the series. You want the characters and situations to be relevant for those exploring the show for the very first time"

"In the meantime, my own fiction was beginning to be noticed and I began getting into more of the better paying, well-distributed anthologies by 'real' publishers. I went to every genre-related convention I could get to, and met tons of other writers and editors, and learned a lot about the business from people who were right there at its heart. I made countless numbers of good friends, and I'm thankful that I'm still in touch with a large number of them, even though I retired *Deathrealm* in the summer of 1997. The magazine had just gotten too big for

me to handle by myself, but didn't make enough money to hire anyone to help me. The horror boom of the 1980s really fizzled out in the 1990s and so fewer publishers could weather the hard times.

"In the last decade, I've had over 80 published works of short fiction. Some of the markets include *Cemetery Dance* magazine, the online anthology *Dark Whispers* from Hardshell Word Factory, Robert Bloch's *Psychos*, *The New Lovecraft Circle*, and numerous Chaosium Cthulhu Mythos anthologies, including *The Azathoth Cycle*, *Singers of Strange Songs*, and many more. In 1994, Macabre, Inc. published a collection of my short stories—*Fugue Devil & Other Weird Horrors*—it's now out of print."

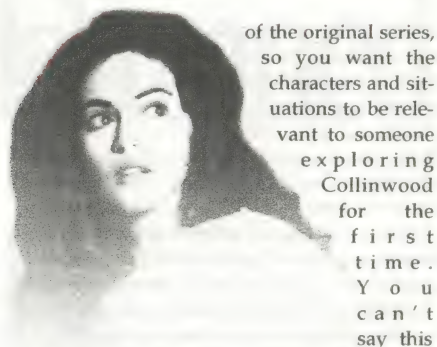
Whilst writing a *Dark Shadows* book had been an ambition for many years, the opportunity to do so came almost purely by chance. "One day I'd been looking for something to read from among my oldest books, and I happened upon the Marilyn Ross *Dark Shadows* novels; I have a dozen or so of them that I've jealously kept since their first printing. I ended up reading the them all, and was lamenting the fact that there would probably never be any more *Dark Shadows* novels, something I had always wished I could write. Then, I received a phone call from Elizabeth Massie, a good friend and writer I've known since about the time I started up *Deathrealm*. She said Harper-Collins was going to starting a new series of *Dark Shadows* novels, and since I knew more about the show than anyone she knew, would I be interested in collaborating on a novel with her? You can guess how the rest of that conversation went. Anyway, by the end of that evening, I'd come up with a rough plot, characters, a bit of dialogue—you name it. Harper liked the idea enough to request a more detailed proposal. After a number of revisions, it was approved, and *Dreams of the Dark* was given the go ahead. Interestingly, the original title, *Dreams of the Damned*, which Beth coined, was deemed too 'heavy' by the powers that be."

And what will the novel have in store for readers? "I was always disappointed that the 1991 *Dark Shadows* series was cut off in mid-stream; it was just starting to hit its stride when it was cancelled. My original idea was to write something that would be able to continue its storyline. However, due to copyright and proprietary concerns, the newer series was off limits. But since the final part of the 1991 series closely paralleled the original show, we decided to work up a storyline that took place not long

after Victoria returned from the 18th century; and could be 'inserted' into the original *Dark Shadows* storyline at the appropriate point. Assuming the current draft is not significantly altered by any editorial revisions, the book bridges some of the disparate elements of the television show and even the films, with less conflict in continuity than could be found even within the television series itself. The plot involves a vampire named Thomas Rathburn [named Blackburn in earlier drafts], who was 'changed' during the Civil War, and in recent days has begun experiencing visions of people and places unfamiliar to him—but that seem to involve certain aspects of his own past. He follows clues from these visions and ends up in Collinsport, and begins meeting people he recognises from the visions, including Victoria Winters and Barnabas. Needless to say, he is agreeably taken with Victoria, a fact that does not sit well with Barnabas Collins. An intense rivalry ensues, and Barnabas makes a number of attempts to rid Collinwood of this strange new arrival. However, Rathburn is not quite the 'ordinary' vampire, and things don't quite work out as Barnabas has envisioned them. In the meantime, strange occurrences begin to plague the members of the household, Vicki in particular. As the events become more threatening, Rathburn begins to realise that the only way he will be able to learn the truth behind the visions—and to save both himself and Victoria—is to form an alliance with Barnabas. Easier said than done, however. For more than that, you'll have to read the book!"

Both authors hit upon an interesting approach towards writing for their main characters: "Since Beth and I had two main points of view—Thomas Rathburn, my original creation, and Victoria Winters, and that they alternated points of view from chapter to chapter, Beth wrote the Victoria chapters and I wrote the Rathburn chapters, at least for the most part. Beth had several pressing deadlines, so I also wrote a few of the Victoria chapters to take up the slack. Then we'd pass the chapters back and forth so each could go in and do any necessary tweaking. In the end, I probably ended up doing about 65 to 70 percent of the actual writing. Which suited me fine, because I could have kept writing *Dark Shadows* for longer than anyone would want to read it."

Given that the original series ended years ago, is it necessary to reinvent the series for a nineties audience? "Not everyone that reads a *Dark Shadows* novel is going to be a devoted fan



of the original series, so you want the characters and situations to be relevant to someone exploring Collinwood for the first time. You can't say this

"Victoria is closely modelled after Joanna Goings's portrayal. Barnabas' character is based on the darker version of House of Dark Shadows"

is a book, or series, for the nineties—the nineties are about spent. *Dreams of the Dark* comes out in the last month of the last year of the 20th century. What we're looking at is a series which, assuming it takes off, is relevant to the 2000s. Perhaps the most important point of all is that *Dark Shadows* is a largely established world in and of itself. The key is to draw your reader into that world, regardless of its time period. In *Dreams of the Dark*, we've written the piece with only suggestions of a specific time frame; there's nothing like in Lara's book, where it flatly states the year is 1971. *Dreams of the Dark* is written as if it is happening 'now'—whenever that 'now' happens to be. The insinuation is that the events are taking place in 1999, or 2000, or what have you, yet they fit into the storyline of 1967 and 1968; our view is that *Dark Shadows* is timeless. The attitudes and personalities of the characters are as close to the original as we can make them, and they react to the world they live in as those people, regardless of the particular year of its setting. To a large extent, *Dark Shadows* has a zeitgeist—independent of the world around it."

Is there a danger of the *Dark Shadows* novels will fall foul of the common flaw of TV-Tie-Ins—becoming mere pastiches of the series that inspired them? "I don't think so, at least, not in the right hands. Certainly, in *Dreams of the Dark*, we've taken the world of the show to places the series never ventured, while remaining true to its spirit. *Angélique's Descent* was certainly no pastiche, and given Lara's creative prowess, I suspect that, if she contributes more to the se-

ries, she would continue to successfully delve into uncharted waters. Most of the material in the original series was derived from other sources; in these novels, one can make a reverent nod to those sources without necessarily falling back on such established formulas. With new talent and imagination combined with the old foundation, there are endless roads that can be travelled in Collinwood."

Were there any concepts that were vetoed? "We've only just turned in the first draft of the novel, so I can't say what revisions might be asked of us at this point—I hope very few. Our

original outline, however, was quite extensive and highly detailed. If there were any major points the editors or Dan Curtis Productions wanted us to change, they should have been addressed by now. My original idea was to perhaps take up the storyline of

the 1991 series and continue it, since it was left so open-ended. However, I was told that this could have run into copyright problems. So, we had to take our primary influence from the original series. Still, I felt it would be neat to fit *Dreams of the Dark* into the original storyline that paralleled the ending of the 1991 series. As it is, I preferred working with the original universe, with a few exceptions. Victoria is much more closely modelled after Joanna Goings than Alexandra Moltke. Barnabas' character is more akin to his darker portrayal seen in *House of Dark Shadows*."

The two feature film spin-offs from the series have also been used as a source of inspiration. for the book. "Without giving too much away, the description of the grounds of Collinwood is based entirely on Lyndhurst, since I went there during the writing of the book and a few aspects of Angélique's character are directly from *Night of Dark Shadows*, without conflicting with the origins of Barnabas.

"The mansion itself is basically based on the sets and exteriors from the television show. A few of the actual interiors of Lyndhurst are also described, as in portions of the house that we never actually saw in the series.

"In the beginning, we were going to tell the entire story through the eyes of our vampire, Thomas Rathburn. But the powers that be—the editors and Dan Curtis Productions—wanted us to have an insider's point of view as well, to give the show's fans a familiar character to identify with. We chose Victoria, and in the end, I'm very glad we went this route. But the

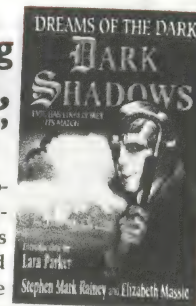
"In *Dreams of the Dark*, we introduce a strong character from outside the world of *Dark Shadows*, providing us with an outsider's view of Collinwood"

biggest thing, I suppose, was that in the beginning, Beth Massie came up with a background for Rathburn that tied into Angélique's story in Lara's book. However, we were told not to use *Angélique's Descent* as a resource, or attempt continuity with it; our book needed to be a complete stand-alone. This might to some extent be due to the fact that, at the time, *Angélique's Descent* had not even been completed, so any changes made to Lara's book would therefore affect our book if we tried to tie them together. As it is, I'm more satisfied with the end result as it is now than if we'd made the connection with *Angélique's Descent*. The only very difficult hurdle was that, in the beginning of the project, we were given precious little information about what we could or couldn't do. We'd do the work, then find out certain changes needed to be made—we'd do that, then have to change a few more things, and so on and so on. It felt like an awful lot of the changes could have been suggested back when we turned in the first draft of the outline rather than the third, and the fourth. All in all, though, it was a very positive experience, and I think the book is stronger for the work we did to it before we even started the actual writing."

What will *Dreams of the Dark* add to the *Dark Shadows* world? "Life! With only reruns, plus the movies and a newer series—to keep the flame alive, there's a finite limit to the *Dark Shadows* entity. Experiencing the show was a very personal thing to a number of its viewers. It has inspired countless unique journeys into the imagination. The Collins family became a living, breathing group of people to its fans. Look at the proliferation of fan fiction *Dark Shadows* inspired, perhaps more than any other media property besides *Star Trek*. That's because fans want the Collins family to continue to thrive in their own imaginations. Our book will hopefully provide a new 'official' episode in a saga that was relegated to fan writing for years, until *Angélique's Descent*. It introduces a strong character from outside the *Dark Shadows* world, one who at first provides an out-

sider's view of the microcosm, then becomes a living part of it. I think that's how we, as viewers and readers, interact with the world of *Dark Shadows*; we're outside looking in, until that crucial moment when we are drawn in, becoming a part of a wonderful world. Most importantly, hopefully, *Dreams of the Dark* will be an exciting and satisfying enough journey to Collinwood to make readers want to come back for more." ♦

Dark Shadows: Dreams of the Dark will be published by Harper-Collins Books in October.



Web of Intrigue

To coincide with the launch of the *Dark Shadows Journal Online*, we take a quick look at some of the choice cuts of *Dark Shadows* available on the Internet:

THE DARK SHADOWS JOURNAL ONLINE

The online home of the magazine, news and information on the show, with articles from past issues.

<http://freespace.virgin.net/stuart.manning/darkshadows.htm>

DARK SHADOWS FAQ HOMEPAGE

The online repository for all information on *Dark Shadows*, including pictures and a huge range of links and the definitive reference guide *Dark Shadows Frequently Asked Questions*, which is available to download.

<http://members.aol.com/tchoate1/ds/faq.htm>

REMEMBERING GRAYSON

This excellent reference source and memorial pays tribute to the late Grayson Hall and her character of Julia Hoffman, with a full biography, rare photographs and a range of poetry and artwork.

<http://members.aol.com/lynn1dave/index.htm>

FLY TO BAT.NET

The new home of the now defunct *Dark Shadows Forum* on AOL, this huge site features up-to-the-minute news, sounds, online postcards and original articles

<http://flyto/bat.net>

<http://members.aol.com/JFridshow/Fridindex.html>

How Fridiculous!

For *Dark Shadows* fans, 1998 will be remembered as the year Jonathan Frid made his return to the fandom arena. We present a look at the event of 1998. Question and Answer transcripts by Terri Darcy and Malia Howard.

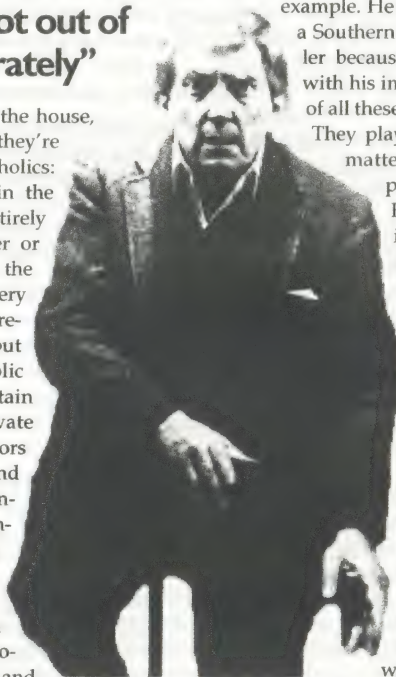
For virtually every fan of *Dark Shadows*, Jonathan Frid is the actor that first attracted them to the show. Healthy and spry at the age of 74, as part of a recent charity benefit he gave two superlative recitals of

Jonathan Frid in *Performance*, before taking the time to field fan questions, speaking at length about acting and life in general.

Although he did not make his stage debut until his teenage years, Jonathan favoured performing from an early age: "My first attempt at acting was putting on church services on my grandmother's staircase. She thought I was going to be a minister! I didn't particularly like my source material, because we were Presbyterians, and Presbyterians are not very dramatic. I would have preferred the Anglican service if I

"I refused to be shaped into a business property. I got out of all that quite deliberately"

had been going to parade around the house, or be a priest in the part. I think they're even better than the Roman Catholics: The Anglicans are very elegant in the way they do things. An actor is entirely different from a priest or minister or even a statesman or a politician in the sense that a priest is a priest every second of his life. Actors become irresponsible, or not irresponsible, but their responsibility to their public only goes to the when the curtain comes down. Then you're a private person. There's far too much of actors being followed morning, noon and night every day. They're not responsible people—any more than a dentist is responsible outside of doing your teeth. But the rest of his life is up to him. A priest is different. And so is a politician and so is a statesman. Public people, have a totally different view on life. Priests and



actors share some of the trappings, and that's what I was doing. My grandmother was terribly upset when I didn't follow through. I'm one of the amoral people in the sense of I'm looking for values all the time. I'm not indifferent to morality. I wonder what it is. I don't allow myself to become part of anybody's party or congregation. I think about religion an awful lot, but I'm not formal. I do have a great respect for religion. I've had a lot of association, I mean. I grew up going to church twice with my grandmother each Sunday, so I certainly was well-churched as a boy! In a way, it didn't turn out at all, and in another way, you never quite forget it, even though you have other ideas about what your religion should be, and what God is. I have a respect for people who give their lives to totally looking after other people. We do that too in our entertaining way, but it's only moment-to-moment."

Jonathan spoke candidly of the acting profession in general: "I have never had any time for all these actors, and Hollywood is usually the scape goat for this. Clark Gable is a perfect example. He didn't allow himself a Southern accent as Rhett Butler because it would interfere with his image—that's the idea of all these guys in Hollywood.

They play a narrow field, no matter whether they're playing the king of Egypt or a cowboy—it's always playing that one narrow focus of themselves. Be honest. Their thing is 'Don't fake it, don't be unnatural, be real'. In England, there is a tradition that you can do anything, the only reason you're acting is you don't want to be yourself. And that was my thing when I got started. I didn't even know who I was, at first. But

"My first acting was putting on church services on my grandmother's staircase. She thought I was going to be a minister!"

I knew the characters I was playing. I want to play different people all the time. I don't see any other point in acting other than to do that. I don't want to just play me."

Whilst Jonathan spoke mainly of his love of theatre, he also talked about his work as Barnabas Collins. Amongst the audience was Edith Tilles, *Dark Shadows*' regular hairstylist, who shared a warm moment with Jonathan, reminiscing about "that Madison Avenue haircut that I always gave you."

"I loved playing villains," he admits, "because they were so far more interesting than heroes. People say 'You're typecast as a heavy.' If you're typecast as a heavy, you're typecast whatever you do; it's a question of how you get out of being in the same category all the time. But actually, the heavies are much more versatile than any goody-two-shoes. That's been my experience, anyway. I have to admit that Barnabas Collins was probably one of the great roles that's ever been played in modern times. I mean the concept of it wasn't always well-written by any means, the concepts varied. I played every kind of emotion over the four years. He went back and forth as a vampire, and his emotional crises were extraordinary.

"I think perhaps one of the things I might as well get to right off the bat, one of the real major understandings that I ever had about acting happened in a most unexpected way—and it was in *Dark Shadows*. What I learned, and it took me almost 25 years to figure this out, but that was a very hellish experience. It was a terrible, terrible time for me at the beginning. I was a slow study and I'd never done much with television and here did new shows every single day. Some of the actors were very easy with it. I can speak of one or two people in *Dark Shadows* who would take a script and get in the taxi going home, and they'd know their lines by the time they got home, and then review them coming back in the taxi in the morning. Well, it took me 24 hours and then still sometimes I didn't know them, as you may have noticed! Summer stock is very much like doing a soap, you have the same amount of stuff to learn for each new week."

During the height of the show's popularity, Jonathan attracted thousands of fans to his personal appearances, and their enthusiasm could

sometimes be counter-productive as he recalled: "There was a supermarket mall situation, and the crowd ran down and then

crammed up to the stage, and somebody fell and was crushed, they were stampeding right over this body. I didn't know what to do. And finally somebody, called the cops, I just left the place. I found a door down the hall, like a broom closet door, in this big mall hall. And I just ran, and fortunately there was a room in there, and there was somebody in there who helped me and I got out. I had to hide—it was a nightmare. I ran to every door, and none would open. They weren't expecting such crowds.

"I don't know if you have ever seen *Dark Shadows* in Spanish. It was called *Las Sombras de las Brosas*, and it was bigger down there than it was up here because it was shown in prime time. That was back in the early Seventies. I was sent down there to Paraguay and the whole government were fans of *Dark Shadows*, court appearances almost, with the great dictator down there, he and his wife were great fans—even the soccer schedules were adjusted! Mobs, mobs, mobs all over the place. I was in Panama that same year and there was a movie festival—I don't know why they had me down there for that one. I guess it had something to do with *House of Dark Shadows*, but there were mobs there too, just on the strength of the movie.

"The press was always showing the fangs all of the time. That was it for them. I thought Barnabas went through every colour of the rainbow in his time. I mean he was back and forth as a vampire. He's vulnerable, he's everything. I had great times with *Dark Shadows*. The only difficulty was that I didn't have time to play all the different possibilities that I wanted to with the role. I did to a certain extent and I wish I were a more efficient actor. I had to struggle, and as an actor was limited for televi-



Not in Vein!

S. R. Shutt casts a critical eye on Jonathan Frid in *Performance*, in a special review.

Just like many readers of this publication, Barnabas Collins became something of a spiritual touchstone for me as a child. I thought of *Dark Shadows* as my secret garden—a safe playground in an otherwise uncertain landscape. Despite all the ‘horrors’ of Collinwood, *Dark Shadows* represented something of a security blanket. I get the impression that this was true for a lot of children all over America in the troubled times of the late Sixties. As an adult I have come to appreciate so many of the extraordinary talents—writers, directors, producers and technicians as well as actors—who brought this magic into being, but as a child two performers definitely stood head and shoulders above all the others: the late Grayson Hall and the still very much alive and kicking Mr. Jonathan Frid.

Jonathan Frid’s latest one-man show is proof positive that this amazing actor’s prime is far from over. Despite what must have been a tiring weekend of travel and last-minute rehearsals, Mr. Frid showed enormous energy onstage. He positively radiated charisma in his hilarious initial selection, *My Yma Dream*, and built from strength to strength throughout the performance that followed. *My Yma Dream* by Thomas Meehan started out with a fantastic image: Yma Sumac at a cocktail party in Jonathan Frid’s apartment.

Miss Sumac is one of my favourite ‘exotic’ performers—she recorded several popular novelty albums in the Fifties and Sixties, which showcased her extraordinary four-octave range, and also appeared in the film *Secret of the Inca*, opposite Charlton Heston. Her appearance in this story was just the beginning of a tongue-twisting tale of social discomfort and etiquette pressed to the breaking point that had us all rolling in the aisles.

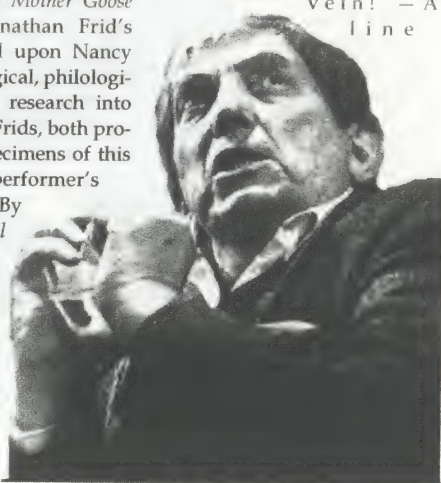
Here There Be Tygers by Stephen King showed how a brilliant performer can illuminate un-

couldn’t resist!) reading of a fateful telephone call... from beyond the grave! His gravely, flat, dark vocal inflection as the mysterious caller was memorably chilling; it was a voice that seemed to echo literally from the depths of a cold, dismal tomb. After an intermission, an old childhood dream came true as I finally got to see what Jonathan Frid performing Shakespeare looked and sounded like. Mere moments separated his invocation of Caliban, the living incarnation of the words ‘drunk and

With his expressive eyes and exquisite voice, there was an incredible intensity whenever Jonathan was on the stage

promising material. In its raw form the King tale would have been worth a chuckle or two. Mr. Frid brought the central figure of Charles to vivid life, and made his various tormentors a delightfully comic parade of small-town malice. Eve Merriam’s *Inner City Mother Goose* rhymes, and Jonathan Frid’s own essay based upon Nancy Kersey’s genealogical, philological and folkloric research into the annals of the Frids, both provided vibrant specimens of this unstoppable performer’s comic acumen. By the time *Dead Call* by William F. Nolan rolled around, we were all gasping for breath—but Mr. Frid soon had us shivering in our seats as he gave a dead-on (sorry,

disorderly’, from Mr. Frid’s switch to ‘Crookback’ *Richard III*, but he managed a breathtaking vocal and physical transformation without any makeup or costume change. Hearing Mr. Frid as Richard bellow “I am not in the vein!” — A line



that could have been very funny, given his noted history portraying one of the most famous

vampires in the annals of pop culture—is a sensation that still makes the blood “recoil from my veins” as the divine Sarah Bernhardt would have said. His madness as Caliban and his vile but all -too-human depths as Richard made both men stunningly believable characters.

Saki’s classic miniature *The Open Window* was a great choice for a change of mood after the unsurpassable glories of Shakespeare, and Mr. Frid gave one a new appreciation for the mordant wit and sardonic humour of this great writer. Then came another original piece, *Disconnected*, about the duel—almost to the death—between Mr. Frid’s mother and his new answering machine.

The concluding recitation, Edgar Allen Poe’s *The Tell-Tale Heart*, was harrowingly enacted, and introduced with a

Jonathan said that he would never forget the applause he received during the show

clever bit of business that had my heart palpitating for all it was worth. Despite the fact that I’ve seen Mr. Frid perform this story on video, his pacing and masterful presence on the stage had me poised on the edge of my seat throughout this new telling.

After the performance, Mr. Frid gave a lecture about his career as an actor. It was fascinating to hear him reflect upon many of the roles he has played (of course he couldn’t even begin to touch upon all of them), from Dr. Sloper in *The Heiress* to Jonathan Brewster in *Arsenic and Old Lace*. He even talked for a bit about his longest run as a certain nocturnal gentleman from Collinsport, Maine. It was very poignant to hear Jonathan Frid recall how his own terror as a relatively untried television performer galvanised the vulnerability and tragic regret he projected as Barnabas with a

subtle emotional energy that gave added truth and depth to his performance on *Dark Shadows*. There was a true sense of wisdom in his reflection upon the gains he reaped from the ‘pain’ of being a idol and working day-to-day under the gruelling conditions of a daytime hit in the late-sixties.

This truly was a wonderful evening in the theatre that had me laughing, shaking, and shivering—sometimes all at once! There is an incredible intensity in the room whenever Jonathan Frid is onstage. Mr. Frid’s beautifully expressive eyes and his sonorous, exquisitely modulated voice linger compellingly in the mind long after the actor himself has left the stage. This was a performance to be kept in memory’s scrapbook—a page which I know I will revisit many times in the years to come.

sion. But I do love the challenge of all these characters in life that you see—to recreate them in your own body. It’s the only real reason I’m acting. I don’t want to be me. I used to play these young kids for a few years way back when I was a teenager. When I was playing as a kid on the street or something I felt I was naked, I didn’t know what to do. I didn’t know who I was. In a sense I still don’t know how to reproduce myself as a character. I’m doing it tonight a bit here on the stage right now.”

Whilst *Dark Shadows* brought Jonathan instant notoriety, he clearly disliked the trappings of being a cult figure, preferring his more modest brand of reader’s theatre: “I love my acting profession, but I refuse to bow to being shaped into a business property. I got out of all that quite deliberately, even if I missed making millions. I wasn’t going to be a toy to these guys. I loved being flexible and private, and I had this great way of doing it with these one-man shows. This is why they are my favourite aspect of my career. Every actor’s been asked, ‘Isn’t

there a part you’ve always wanted to play?’ Most actors do have a part that they’d like to play. I don’t have that problem—I just put them in my reader’s theatre and do it.

“I’m amused by the biographies sometimes. They make me sound like I was controlling my choice like sharing a little secret that actors go around making their choices—we take what we can get! Sometimes we wait months, even a year before we do anything, even the big names. Sometimes they get into a trap where they’re so concerned with their ego trip, not ego, they’re usually sensible about such things, and they turn down smaller, good roles because they do not want to demean themselves by going down to a lesser kind of role, whatever that means to them or anybody. In fact, reader’s theatre has given me the greatest happiness in my life for the last ten years. I guess I can express it by contrasting it with one year that I was touring with *Arsenic and Old Lace* (in the role of Jonathan Brewster during 1986 and 1987) and this created a happy, happy year for me. I



The noise is unbelievable! Just awful! Where I lived, there is a crossroads in Manhattan. There was a fire station down that way and a police station and another fire station and the traffic always collided at this crossroads. The traffic wouldn't move off the streets, so the front of the line would clear the traffic with the fire engines coming up. So they wouldn't move for the guy that was coming in behind, and so it was just bedlam. The other night I had to stop there, it was quite late, but I was still up and it was so awful. I really do think New York is a dreadful

place to live. The town I'm living in up there is getting pretty bad too. The developments are going crazy up there. I had 40 years in New York but that's enough."

As most fans know, Jonathan has not attended any recent *Dark Shadows* festivals since his semi-retirement, though he admitted that there is a possibility that he might return: "This is the first time I've come out of my little hole. I wanted a break for a few years. If I came out it would just be something like this. I just moved to Canada and wanted to retire, just like anyone, not that an actor ever really does retire. I may yet go back some day."

Jonathan's life in Canada remains low profile, but he still indulges his love of performing: "I don't feel in retirement mood. I have a garden and I'm living in my first own house ever. I'm enjoying that. I've been quite busy the last year or so. I've been to high schools and do scenes for these kids, demonstrating reader's theatre. I find myself getting into schools, which I've always wanted to do. I've always been a frustrated teacher. I'm glad I've never been an official teacher, because I'd be responsible for graduating these kids. This way I'm just a quack!" ♦

was out there for a year and it was the best role I've ever had, playing for the longest time. It was a great role because I had to play a villain, a killer, and obviously a villain in a farce. I had farcical scenes to do with this idiot Dr. Einstein, taking bodies in and out while the two aunts are killing off all these men for good reasons—letting them have peaceful happiness in death. They buried them down in the basement. Their idiot nephew is a real killer. They bring in a body onto a window seat and they're going to hide it there until the morning. But here, it's a gruesome scene, but hilariously funny. For myself, it was my last performance that I was pleased the most with. I was so mercurial. I scared the hell out of everybody one minute and then in a flash they were laughing."

Whilst reader's theatre is obviously Jonathan's favourite performing medium, he admitted that: "I'm not a very big reader. I read the newspaper, but I haven't read a novel in years, yet I love doing these shows. I don't know why I'm not a bigger reader than I am. And I always have something to read with me at the little restaurant I eat at. I've lived by myself a lot, and I've always got a script around, because I'm always going to do something. I've not done this entire show like this in several years. Some of them I want to revive. I've found some of the stories by myself, but most of them were suggested by other people. Most of my friends are very literary-oriented and read a lot. I get their reflections of current literature. I'm not a reader myself except for non-fiction."

Jonathan left New York for his native Canada in 1994, and found it a very easy adjustment to make: "I don't miss New York at all. In fact, I was there just this last week for two or three days, as I was last June—the times I've been back since I left about four or five years ago. And I hadn't missed it at all. I had 40 years of it.

Win Frid!

Thanks to the generosity of the organisers of the Jonathan Frid show, we have been offered a special prize to give away in our first ever competition.

If you would like to win a programme from the event, autographed by Jonathan himself, simply answer this super easy question: On which hand does Barnabas usually wear his onyx ring?

Simple enough? To enter, you need only jot down your answer on a postcard and send it to *Fridiculous Competition*, at the editorial address. This competition is only open to current subscribers of the magazine, and entries must arrive no later than October 1, 1999. Thank you to Nancy Kersey and Helen Samaras for their kind donation.

Printed Matter

THE DARK SHADOWS MOVIE BOOK

Edited by Kathryn Leigh Scott and Jim Pierson
Pomegranate Press, Ltd: ISBN 0-938817-48-5
Available from Forbidden Planet (£0171 836 4179)

In the early 1970s, two theatrical films were produced to capitalise on the popularity of *Dark Shadows*: *House of Dark Shadows* in 1970, and *Night of Dark Shadows* in 1971. Unlike most movie versions of popular television shows, the *Dark Shadows* films presented a version of the story very different from what the fans were accustomed to seeing on the small screen. *House of Dark Shadows* is a dark retelling of the arrival of Barnabas Collins at his ancestral home, and its tragic consequences. *Night of Dark Shadows* is an erotic ghost story that takes place in a parallel time, where the familiar faces belong to very different people.

The *Dark Shadows Movie Book* is also very different from the usual sort of book that is put out to commemorate a movie and the people who made it possible. Included is a section of colour photos along with essays by some of the actors, but the heart of the book is the presentation of the actual shooting scripts of *House* and *Night of Dark Shadows*, annotated throughout with revisions by director Dan Curtis.

Many fans know that both movie versions were edited down from the director's final version. *House* was trimmed slightly but *Night of Dark Shadows* sustained a major hatchet job at the order of an MGM executive, who demanded that Curtis reduce the film's length by a quarter—and gave him less than 24 hours to do it! That the finished product is watchable at all is a miracle, and one wonders what scenes ended up on the cutting room floor, and what the original film was like... Wonder no more!

Though it seems that no director's version of either film has survived, reading the scripts gives an idea of what Curtis and the writers (Sam Hall and Gordon Russell on *House*, and Sam Hall working solo on *Night*) had intended the films to be. An evening spent with a videotape of *Night of Dark Shadows*, a copy of the *Movie Book*, and the VCR remote in hand will give you a greater appreciation of this film, which has often been criticised by fans because of its confusing storyline and its lack of resemblance to the familiar 'world' of *Dark Shadows*.

The *House of Dark Shadows* script restores the infamous 'hanging David' scene, and the Nancy Hodiak segments, which were eliminated when Marie Wallace—for whom the cameo was conceived—left the television show.

Many fans wonder what the original version of *Night of Dark Shadows* was really like. Wonder no more!

Of greater interest to me were the brief scenes illuminating the relationship between Barnabas and Julia, which make her subsequent actions more understandable.

The 16-page colour photo section includes photos of scenes edited from the finished films and candid photos of the stars in and out of character costume. The essays by Nancy Barrett, Kate Jackson and Lara Parker share their experiences during the filming, though my favourite section is Kathryn Leigh Scott's *House of Dark Shadows* shooting diary, in which she complains

about her costumes, shooting conditions, and even some of her co-stars. *Meow!*

If you have copies of either of the films, this book belongs on the shelf next to them. Even if you disliked the films—and some hold *House of Dark Shadows* in low esteem because of its violence and its villainous depiction of Barnabas—you may want to add it to your collection, if only for the essays, the photo section and the behind-the-scenes look into the production, and the artistic vision of Dan Curtis and Sam Hall.



THE DARK SHADOWS COLLECTIBLES BOOK

Written by Craig Hamrick. Pomegranate Press, Ltd: 0-938817-15-9. Available by mail order only. Send a cheque for £10.75 payable to K. L. Scott to: P.O. Box 17217, Beverly Hills, CA 90209-3217.

Oh, to have been a child with a generous spending allowance during the height of *Dark Shadows*' popularity... you could have cheerfully spent all of your pocket money on comic books, posters, gum cards, magazines, games, puzzles and plastic models bearing the likenesses of Barnabas, Quentin and your other favourite characters. Merchandising of toys, books and other items tied into popular television shows was not a new idea when *Dark Shadows* was originally broadcast but what made this unique was that the show was a soap opera whose target audience was housewives, not their children. Though if Mom were a *Dark Shadows* fan, she could have spent the grocery money on record albums featuring instrumental versions of *Dark Shadows* music by artists such as Henry Mancini and Lawrence Welk, or on the series of Gothic romance novels written by Marilyn Ross which were loosely based on the show.

Time passes though and toys are broken and discarded and the books and records are left to moulder in the basement or attic, eventually hauled away with the trash or sold off at garage sales. It's the lucky fan who has made it to adulthood with their *Dark Shadows* memorabilia in reasonably good shape. And for the rest of us, whose mothers were zealous about house-keeping or were too young to see the show in its initial airings, many of the aforementioned *Dark Shadows* items are still to be found at thrift stores and flea markets, and at science fiction and horror conventions, such as the annual *Dark Shadows* festivals. And in conjunction with the renewed interest in *Dark Shadows* thanks to the release of all the episodes on MPI Home Video and its run on the Sci-Fi Channel, there are a whole next 'generation' of collectibles.

The *Dark Shadows Collectibles Book* by Craig Hamrick is a checklist for those who have managed to hang onto their precious *Dark Shadows* memorabilia, and a shopping list for those who want to start their own collections. And even if you have neither the money nor inclination to begin acquiring *Dark Shadows* collectibles, you will find this book to be an interesting overview of the marketing of *Dark Shadows*. Hamrick covers all of the commonly available collectibles—the novels, the comics and the teen magazines—and the rare ones, like the Barnabas

Collins Halloween costume and the Horror Heads. The book is heavily illustrated with clear photos of all of the collectibles, and also includes detailed descriptions, and plot synopses of the 'Marilyn' Ross novels and the comic books, as well as tie-ins to the two movies and the 1991 series.

Hamrick concludes the book with a list of estimated prices of all the collectibles described. I must stress that he has given prices for mint condition items, emphasis on the word 'mint'. These prices may seem very high, but based on my experiences in acquiring *Dark Shadows* memorabilia, most of these items can be found in fair to good condition at more reasonable prices, at the festivals and conventions, as well as at thrift stores and flea markets.

A casual fan may want to pass on this book, but it is a must read for ageing 'boomers' who fondly remember the comic books, gum cards, and teen magazines, and for anyone who is interested in observing the impact of *Dark Shadows* on the pop culture of its time.

Emily Klaczak

DARK SHADOWS: ANGÉLIQUE'S DESCENT

Written by Lara Parker. Harper-Entertainment (A division of Harper-Collins): ISBN 0-06-105751-7. Available from Forbidden Planet (☎ 0171 836 4179)

In the twenty-six years since Paperback Library published their final *Dark Shadows* novel, *Barnabas*, *Quentin* and *the Vampire Beauty*, fans of the series have been treated to a wide range of merchandise, including videotapes, laserdiscs, toys, comics, graphic novels and a seemingly exponentially expanding range of non-fiction books. Incredibly, despite this evidence of the series' continued marketability, no publishing house has shown an interest in marketing *Dark Shadows* fiction since 1972. In many ways, it is perhaps the Paperback Library series that has shackled potential *Dark Shadows* novels in their own proverbial chained coffin. Dan Ross, the author of all 32 original Paperback Library books was prolific indeed, but the books themselves left much to be desired, being poorly written, both in terms of plot and characterisation. To fans they remain an amusing curiosity often to be collected rather than read—to the public at large, they merely reinforced the belief that the series was little more than a cheap and tacky soap opera: a misconception which has taken years to erode.

It was not until early in 1998 that word filtered through to fans of the series that a *Dark Shadows* novel was to be issued by Harper-

Engaging Lara Parker to launch this series was a calculated risk. With the benefit of hindsight, it has to be said that she was an inspired choice

Collins Books—surely the most appropriately monickered publisher for *Dark Shadows*! Written by the popular original series actress, Lara Parker, *Angélique's Descent* debuted in November 1998, testing the water to see if further titles would be viable. The novel was unleashed amid much publicity in the States, Lara Parker making personal appearances at many bookstores to sign copies of the book. The big question on my lips as *Dark Shadows* returned to the bookstands was whether or not *Angélique's Descent* would be a good enough 'pilot' book to generate a new series of *Dark Shadows* novels.

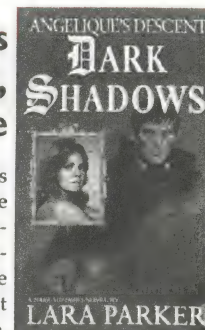
First impressions of any book are vitally important, and in terms of presentation, Harper-Collins have done a first class job. The cover is impressive and well designed, and the book's length lends it credibility as a bone-fide novel as opposed to a run-of-the-mill television tie-in. The cover design is perhaps a little misleading, duping potential buyers into believing that the story centres upon Barnabas Collins, who is practically a secondary character in Parker's novel. This decision was no doubt taken to capitalise on the series main icon, and this is perfectly understandable. With this in mind, it is therefore surprising that the book itself is very much atypical for *Dark Shadows*—the choice of the Caribbean for the setting of the majority of the book is an extremely brave move, and one that gives notice of Harper-Collins' intent. It seems that they wish to breathe new life into the *Dark Shadows* format, and not always do what their readership might expect of them. This can only be good.

Without wishing to be unfair to Lara Parker, it can be said that her engagement as the author to launch the Harper-Collins series was something of a calculated risk. As a writer she was something of an unknown quantity—*Angélique's Descent* would be the first novel she had ever written—but in her favour was the obvious publicity she could generate as a well-remembered player on the original *Dark Shadows* series. With the benefit of hindsight, it has to be said that she was an inspired choice, for she has proven beyond any doubt that her talents stretch beyond the acting sphere. The novel is well written, engagingly plotted, entertaining and at times, quite simply impossible to put down. Parker's descriptive style is perhaps

a little flowery, but this is not distracting, and quite suits the novel's atmosphere—it appears influenced by gothic romance a good deal more than it is by the horror genre.

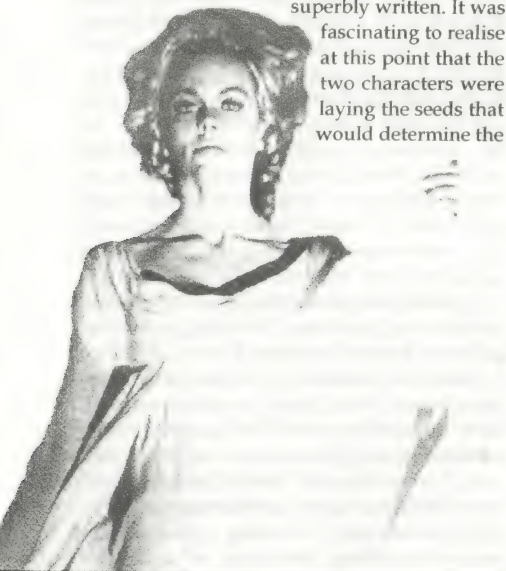
Overlooking the clumsy phraseology that once or twice momentarily spoils the flow, I found my eyes gliding over words that had been strung together with the skill of a natural communicator. These days, most television tie-in novels are 300 page clumsily-written bores. It is therefore something of a revelation to read a book which, at over 500 pages still left me wanting more.

Characterisation is generally good, and each of those who originally graced the halls of Collinwood in the various timelines are well depicted. Lara Parker's strong memories of her time on the show, and of the actors, with whom she performed for several years, have obviously paid dividends, for it is clear that the mannerisms of the characters mirror those of the actors. Roger Collins, particularly, is spot on, and Parker's descriptions of the overstated actions and affectations of Julia Hoffman and the Countess DuPres left me in no doubt that the much-missed Grayson Hall was very much alive in the text. Barnabas is also well drawn, and it is particularly interesting to see how he is perceived by Angélique—someone who loves him obsessively but whom he has wronged. The Barnabas of *Angélique's Descent* is far removed from the sympathetic, tragic character we are used to seeing: he is weak-willed, cannot control his passion and seems to have little concern for the feelings of the woman he once promised to marry. This is not a criticism—it is fascinating to see a different viewpoint, and this is a perfectly valid one that certainly is not a complete surprise—there are many pointers in the series that give us hints that Barnabas had skeletons in his closet long before the bat flew in for a bite... There are a couple of occasions where Barnabas drops out of character—I can't see him referring to anyone as "Poor bastards..." or to Roger as 'Uncle'. These are obvious errors, which ought to have been picked up during proof-reading, but they only stand out because everything else seems so accurate—



long gone, thankfully, are the days when you picked up a *Dark Shadows* novel and pointed out the one or two moments in the book when a character was actually recognisable!

Strongest of the characters in this novel is undoubtedly Angélique, and really this must come as no surprise, as, having played the part for four years, Lara Parker has a greater understanding of her than of the others. Parker takes us through Angélique's life from a very early age, and reveals the milestones in her life and how they turned her towards witchcraft, and ultimately, to evil. It is easy for the reader to sympathise with Angélique as she is constantly in adversity, whether she being held captive to impersonate the goddess Erzulie by Theodore Bouchard, or being hurt inestimably by the betrayal meted out to her by Barnabas Collins. Occasionally in the series, Angélique would be written very much as a two-dimensional character, saved only by Lara Parker's ever-watchable performance—between the covers of *Angélique's Descent*, she is a whole person. She has a history, we see the reasons behind her actions and we are also privy to her innermost thoughts. Her continued attempts to reject the Dark Spirit give us reason to discount Angélique as being inherently evil, and this diversion from the televised scheme of things makes her a more intriguing and rounded character than we had seen before. The sequence featuring Angélique's confrontation with Barnabas following his decision to marry Josette rather than her is quite simply electrifying and superbly written. It was fascinating to realise at this point that the two characters were laying the seeds that would determine the



fate of the other—far more interesting than the "Barnabas as victim" stance of the original. There are some very nice touches in the book. Lara Parker has clearly made painstaking researches into voodoo and black magic rituals and these sequences are highly convincing.

Whether intentional or not, the burning down of the Old House by Barnabas must have had a significant effect upon many fans of the series who have always rued the fact that Spratt House, the mansion used for the Old House in *Dark Shadows*, burned to the ground in 1969. As I read of the Old House being consumed in flames, I spared a thought for the *Dark Shadows* location that I will never be able to see.

If there is anything to complain about in *Angélique's Descent*—and to be honest, there is very little—it is that the level of coincidence in the storyline occasionally stretches the credulity to breaking point. While they are unlikely, Angélique's frequent meetings with Barnabas—a man who lives thousands of miles from her—could be explained away as illustrating that their lives are fated to be intertwined. However, the unexpected—and quite ludicrous—revelation that Andre DuPres was in fact Angélique's father definitely stretched my disbelief a little too far. The story didn't need the loose end of Angélique's lineage to be tied up, and particularly not in this way. This was a soap-opera plot device in a novel that needn't have compromised its quality for the sake of it. The climax to the novel is the only other slight disappointment for me, it being set in a timeline—1795—where the *Dark Shadows* story is already mapped out. Once again, we see them from a different perspective, but there is a real feeling of déjà-vu for the seasoned fan. It is interesting to note that the original timeline is presented in *Angélique's Descent*, as the family governess is Phyllis Wick and not Victoria Winters. It is unclear whether this was an editorial decision taken for simplicity's sake, but this demonstrates the unorthodox and refreshing way in which timelines flow in *Dark Shadows*.

So, is *Angélique's Descent* good enough to blow away the cobwebs hanging around *Dark Shadows* fiction since the days of Dan Ross's pulp fiction forays? I think so. The audience weaned on the Paperback Library series has grown up and Lara Parker has delivered an intelligent and entertaining book for a mature audience. I hope that we haven't heard the last of Lara Parker as a writer—she is plainly talented in this field—anyone for *Angélique's Ascent*?

Alan Hayes

1897: A Fine Vintage

The 1897 flashback is considered to be the quintessential *Dark Shadows* storyline. **Stuart Manning** examines if the story lives up to its incredible reputation.

The winner of the greatest number of fan polls, highest ratings and the distinction of being the longest-running *Dark Shadows* storyline, the 1897 flashback—which took viewers through nine entire months of 1969—is generally considered to represent some of the finest work the *Dark Shadows* production team ever produced. Acclaimed for introducing the only character ever to rival the mainstream popularity of Barnabas, one could



In an sequence filled with a number of exemplary characters and actors, David Selby shines in the role of Quentin Collins.

be forgiven for wondering what it is that sets

this particular set of episodes above all the others. Undoubtedly 1897 represents the peak of *Dark Shadows* as an engaging show for people of all ages. Within eighteen short months, the complexity of the plots would separate the fans from the casual viewers and begin the show's downwards slide towards cancellation. But for the moment, viewers could revel in a show that had never been stronger both artistically and in terms of audience popularity.

To coin a phrase, with this story, there really is something for everyone. For the long term fans, there are a number of charming asides pointing back to past stories; for the new influx of fans, there was a strong story with plenty of surprises and an attractive central performer.

Freed from the atrocious fashions of the late sixties, *Dark Shadows* could finally emerge as a true evocation of the literature that had inspired so many of its stories. Historically set closer to the time when so many of the classic Gothic texts were composed, *Dark Shadows* had literally travelled back to its roots—and how glorious it was. Ironically, the one time period that seemed most appropriate for *Dark Shadows* was not the one that it chose to use most often.

In many ways, the year itself is pretty irrelevant. The writers may have chosen to call it 1897, but the result on-screen is very much an unreal never never world. What emerges is not so much a time period, but a flavour—a murky, claustrophobic world of velvet bodices and silk cravats, filled with dark corridors and fresh-faced heroines. The costumes and sets make for a gallery of beautiful im-

Did You Know...

◆ During the taping of this sequence, Thayer David was married to actress Valerie French on October 31, 1969. Count Petofi was absent from the show around that period, presumably to allow them a brief honeymoon.

◆ Musical highlights heard during this sequence include *Quentin's Theme*, which was re-recorded by Charles Randolph Grean, reaching number 13 on the *Billboard* 100 *Hot Singles* chart and number 3 on their *Easy Listening* chart. It earned a 1969 Grammy Nomination for Best Instrumental Theme. A vocal version, featuring narration by David Selby charted at a disappointing number 125. The theme was originally composed by Robert Cobert for Dan Curtis' *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* along with *I'm Gonna Dance with You*, Pansy Faye's theme. This was re-released as *I Wanna Dance with You*, with vocals by David Selby and Nancy Barrett. A music video of sorts featured in episode 873 as a dream sequence. The vocal version of *Shadows of the Night* received similar treatment in episode 786.

◆ Before landing the role of Aristede, the late Michael Stroka had auditioned unsuccessfully for Dan Curtis' pilot anthology series *Dead of Night*.

Mummy Murder!

Dark Shadows—to die for? The following excerpts are from *The Year the Mets Lost Last Place* by Paul Zimmerman and Dick Schaap (Signet Books, 1969). The episode in question is 792:

4.00pm: Frank Graddock is settled comfortably before the TV set at his home in the Ridgewood section of Queens. He is watching the Mets, and, according to later police reports, he has been drinking during the telecast. His wife, Margaret, walks over to the set and switches the channel away from the Met game. It is time for one of her favourite daytime serials, *Dark Shadows*, and today she will find out whether Quentin, who carries the curse of the werewolf, will be able to keep the mummy's hand he has pursued through the last few episodes. Frank Graddock doesn't care about Quentin, his curse or the mummy's hand. He wants to see the ninth inning of the ball game, he and his wife begin to argue over the Mets and the monsters.

4.04pm: On *Dark Shadows*, Quentin faces an agonising decision: Should he keep the mummy's paw or return it in exchange for advice from Angélique on how to shake the werewolf's curse? Margaret Graddock wants to find out, but her husband insists upon watching a baseball game. She switches the channel; he switches back to Shea Stadium.

4.07pm: Boswell, forced to wait at second to see if the ball will be caught, moves only to third. Clendenon reaches second. The tying runs are in scoring position, and the fans at Shea Stadium are screaming.

4.08pm: Margaret Graddock is screaming, too. She wants to see *Dark Shadows*. Angélique, the witch, is explaining how she was once bitten by a vampire. Frank Graddock screams back at his wife and starts hitting her, too, the police say later. Reportedly, Frank Graddock punches his wife in the head and body. Angélique, the witch, is about to strangle a man to death. Cleon Jones is about to come to bat.

4.13pm: Frank Graddock is watching the Mets on his television set. Margaret, is lying in bed, nursing the injuries she allegedly suffered trying to get to see *Dark Shadows*. Her husband concentrates upon the game, unaware that she is fatally hurt, unaware that he will be charged the following day, with first-degree murder. ♦

O ages, embellished by the dream-like charm of sequences such as the I-Ching trances, poetically conveyed with a surreal corridor of doors, laden with strong visual metaphor.

The essence of pure theatre percolates throughout, the obviously three-walled sets making an appropriate stage, with costume and performances adding a welcome touch of flamboyance and theatre. The minimalist trappings of the story are further emphasised by its scope—characters such as the apparently mighty Count Petofi usually have no further ambitions than to destroy the Collins estate, yet conversely this frequently works to add to their menace. By comparison, the rest of the world seems so detached and remote as a concept, that to pose a threat towards it would seem hollow and uninvolved.

Perhaps it is the richness in character development that truly sets the sequence apart. In the 1795 flashback, the new personalities were almost exclusively limited to simple instances of role reversal: The neurotic, alcohol-dependant Roger Collins paired with his outwardly formidable but internally weak sister Elizabeth were counter-pointed with the patriarchal Joshua and his weak, alcoholic wife Naomi. Whilst it was obviously an effective dramatic device, it did rob the 1795 cast of status as characters in their own right. By contrast, the characters of 1897 are varied and complete entities: the sour, ultimately vengeful Judith Collins (Joan Bennett) is a character with many similarities to Elizabeth, though a range of notable differences. In many ways, Judith could almost be an alternative version of Elizabeth—a window into what her approach to being head of the household might have been had the events surrounding Paul Stoddard's disappearance not taken such a tragic turn. Similarly, the scripts for characters such as Magda and Trask are filled with complex undertones and flourishes of personality.

And let's not forget how funny things were on occasion. Never before or after had *Dark Shadows* dared to be so openly comedic. Sandor and Magda, that much-celebrated gypsy duo, were probably the two most obviously comical personalities ever to grace a *Dark Shadows* story. Blessed with skilful portrayals from Thayer David and Grayson Hall, pitched on just the right side of camp, the results are a joy to behold. When dealing with Barnabas initially, Magda's tone is utterly contemptuous, with Grayson Hall's delivery practically dripping with sarcasm. Ironically, this also highlights the

gradual mellowing of Barnabas' character. Never before has he allowed another person to undermine his authority, worlds away from the severe actions seen in his his early days.

By now, the show had also lasted long enough to begin using its existing continuity to actively enhance its storytelling. The resurrection of the basic template of the Trask character, along with Diana Millay's return in the role of Laura Collins stand out as two obvious examples.

One of the other great achievements of this sequence is its sheer number of subplots, often more than were lavished on many of the present-day scenarios. In marked contrast to the relatively simple linear stories seen in other flashbacks, 1897 has only a sketchy conclusion to work towards, namely Quentin's salvation. Frequently, however, this plot is kept strictly in the background, and beyond using it as a creative bookmark, the writers never allow it to dictate to the storyline, using it only where it has good dramatic cause. In short, the writing itself had never been stronger. One of the most interesting elements of the scripting is the way in which the supernatural material is dispensed with almost entirely to begin with, in favour of the claustrophobic intrigue concerning Edith Collins' will. Instead of resorting to the usual ghouls and ghosts, the show confidently lays the foundation for its new format, taking the time to properly map out the new cast, giving them clear motivation and character. It is something of a quiet triumph that all involved had the confidence to temporarily abandon the usual thrills and spills, and its ultimate strengthening of the storyline speaks for itself. Most interestingly, it proves that *Dark Shadows* at its best is simply a case of telling interesting stories on a small canvas, and these dramatic compositions remain in the mind long after the glow of a Chromakey aura has faded. The revelation of Edith's guarded secret remains one of *Dark Shadows'* most memorable cliffhangers.

It is with a similar confidence that the writers tackle the month-long loss of actor Jonathan Frid, in this case using the situation to strong dramatic ends, making it appear that the unthinkable had happened and that Barnabas had truly met his match. The next time such an absence was necessary, the on-screen explanation used proved to be a complete waste of dramatic opportunity.

It is a credit to all involved that *Dark Shadows* manages to convincingly play the rich comedy



The writers may call it 1897, but the result on screen is very much a dark never-never world filled with velvet bodices and silk cravats

of characters such as the bawdy Cockney dancer Pansy Faye alongside the quiet human tragedy of stories such as Quentin's and Jenny's. A staple of practically every gothic novel ever written, the lone light seen in the mansion's tower leads the path to a deep secret. In this case, it is the pitiful kingdom of the deranged Jenny Collins, lost through her abuse at Quentin's hands. Judith's manipulation of Jenny's obsession with her toy dolls simultaneously evokes feelings of pity and horror. Terry Crawford brings a similar emotional depth to the character of Beth Chavez, yet another of Quentin's corrupted women. A dark irony is threaded throughout Quentin's relationships—in each case he succeeds in breaking the will of those who seek to support him.

Taking centre stage amidst the new characters was the striking figure of Quentin Collins, portrayed by David Selby. Easily the strongest character to enter the show since Barnabas, the figure seen in the flashback was certainly nothing like the iconic spectre seen in the present day. Instead, the writers invested Quentin with a considerable amount of background, frequently allowing him to play a greater role within the proceedings than Barnabas ever receives. Selby himself tackles the character well, eloquently conveying the darker shades of Quentin's personality, without compromising them for short-term audience sympathy. Indeed, Selby frequently is at pains to emphasise the deceitful, abhorrent nature of Quentin rather than any strength or integrity he might possess, allowing the sympathy to flow naturally from the situations he faces. The writers



1897 is regarded as the peak of *Dark Shadows*. Within eighteen short months, the complex plots would begin the show's slide towards cancellation.



had always been very concerned to absolve Barnabas of his crimes to a large degree, which worked well with Jonathan Frid's portrayal. By comparison, Quentin is a dark, broken individual, though largely by his own doing, and David Selby's youthful features often make for an engaging contrast with the world-wearing cynicism of the character. Few could argue that Barnabas deserved to receive his curse, yet when one looks at Quentin's generally callous attitudes towards the women in his life and their welfare, his fate seems almost earned.



In a way, *Dark Shadows* had matured somewhat in its depiction of evil. Quentin and many of those around him are not evil by nature, yet do bad things in reaction to their current situations. Even Count Petofi, one of the most overtly 'villainous' personalities ever seen on *Dark Shadows*, is given clear motivations of

avarice, self-preservation and revenge to explain his actions. It is undoubtedly a far more complex outlook than was initially bestowed upon characters such as Angélique in 1795, whom by comparison seems utterly facile in her motivations.

A skilful combination of well-plotted writing and a carefully controlled performance for Selby allows Quentin's journey from anti-hero to redeemed soul to be convincingly achieved, without ever resorting to anything resembling shorthand storytelling. This well-developed scenario ultimately gives the story a strong cohesive element, binding its disparate threads together.

So, is 1897 truly the finest of all the *Dark Shadows* storylines? To anyone reviewing the episodes, it is a question that really does not need to be asked. The sequence is a showcase of the elements upon which *Dark Shadows* built its success, and for that reason if no other, it stands as a triumph to the strength of the series format and cast. Admittedly, many of its storylines are brazen crib-robs from the world of gothic literature, though few could deny that the writers successfully employ that material in a manner

which does it and the show justice. It is certainly far from being a derivative mess. Above all, the 1897 flashback primarily aspires first and foremost to be a diverting yarn, and in that aspiration it succeeds without question. The storyline represents to many a secure point in their childhoods, when a dashing hero called Barnabas could defeat an enemy with a stare and never fail to thwart the forces of evil. Barnabas' underlying quest to save young David Collins helped make the character something of a protective figure to children, the sharper edges of the character now replaced with more careworn attributes. Children no longer needed to be scared of him. It seems no coincidence that when Barnabas lost his conscience during the Leviathan sequence that followed, many of the viewers lost interest in his character.

1897 is when *Dark Shadows* was at its most consistently enjoyable, filled with drama, humour and emotion, and for that reason I consider the sequence's fine reputation to be deserved one. Required viewing! ♦

Did You Know...

- ♦ Originally Edward Collins was to be named Oscar Collins. Other discarded names included Zoltan for Sandor, whilst several planned characters never made it before the cameras: Before being cast as Minerva Trask, Clarice Blackburn was considered for the roles of a governess called Mrs. Collier and Odette Morgan, a rich southern aunt to a Nancy Barrett character.
- ♦ The casket containing the hand of Count Petofi was an existing prop, which had been seen several times previously in the sets for Collinwood.
- ♦ 1897 was the longest storyline featured on *Dark Shadows*, and enjoyed some of the highest ratings of the show's entire run, averaging 18,000,000 viewers a week. The story was originally planned to last three months, but was extended to eight-and-a-half because of the strong viewer response and impressive audience figures.
- ♦ Jonathan Frid had asked that a second male lead be introduced on *Dark Shadows* for some time before Quentin's debut. Ironically, several teen magazines ran stories of jealous feuds between Frid and David Selby.

Divine Discomfort

In the last issue, we chronicled the early career of actress **Grayson Hall**. We rejoin her career in the mid-Sixties, as **S. R. Shutt** takes a look at some of her most acclaimed work.

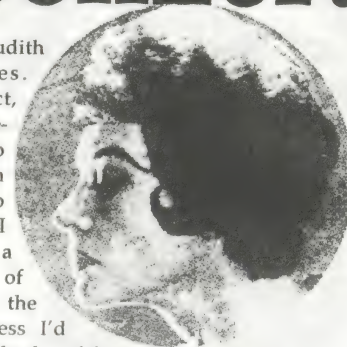
June 1964 was a month in which the contradictory currents of Grayson Hall's career through the mid-Sixties were encapsulated in the space of a few scant weeks. The month opened with rehearsals for her appearance as a chic fashion magazine editor in a regional production of the musical *No Strings*. Mounted over 23-28 June in the carnival atmosphere of an enormous circus-tent at the Lambertville Music Circus in the Philadelphia suburbs, where future *Dark Shadows* co-star Virginia Vestoff had just completed a run in *Camelot*, the role demanded that Grayson conquer one of her greatest fears: singing on stage. "I had never sung before in my life," she recalled a year later. "If someone had said to me, 'Tomorrow you've got to play Lady Macbeth,' I would have been less nervous than at the thought of singing... I was in a musical in New York, *Subways are for Sleeping*, but I didn't have to sing." Despite her trepidation, Grayson acquitted herself well in the role (she performed the part "with appropriate sophistication," according to a local critic). The month ended about as far away from a tent in the fields of Lambertville as one could get, with Grayson, Sam, and Matthew among the international glitterati at the world-premiere for *Night of the Iguana*, at Lincoln Center. Late in the previous summer of 1963, Grayson had boarded an aeroplane at New York's Idlewild Airport, bound for *Iguana's* location shoot in Puerto Vallarta. A publicity photographer snapped shots of Grayson dandling five-year-old Matthew on the runway in her chic shawl and patent leather pumps. Not very practical for Mexico, perhaps, but it created the desired impression. Grayson recalled in a 1971 interview that she had thought she was so "awful" in her audition with John Huston in New York, she was secretly convinced that some mistake had been made when the director hired her for the role of

Miss Judith Fellowes.

"In fact, when I reported to work in Puerto Vallarta, I made a point of wearing the same dress I'd worn on the day of the audition. I was sure he'd say, 'Oh no, not her. This is a mistake.' Instead, he said, 'Have a nice trip, honey?'" The long hot autumn in Puerto Vallarta had proven by turns exciting, exhausting, and boring. Now at last, *Night of the Iguana* was having its premiere. Among the people Grayson must have looked forward to seeing again was Elizabeth Taylor. Though not a cast member, she had been very much a presence on the scene; her notorious affair with Richard Burton was then at its height, and magazines were rife with speculation as to whether Burton would marry Liz, or run off with Ava Gardner, Sue Lyon, some Mexican dancer, or even another man. In an Internet bulletin board posting in 1998, Grayson's son Matthew Hall recalled:

Richard Burton told Grayson: "You are unique. When that camera is on you, the rest of us might as well not be there"

"Elizabeth was extremely kind, and took to mom as if they had known each other forever. Six months after *Iguana* was filmed, either Mom or Elizabeth was in a show (I don't this second remember which) and the other came backstage to see the one after a performance. In the dressing room, Elizabeth pulled up her skirt, and asked 'Do you have these funny spots on your legs? I've had them since Mexico.' Mom hiked up her skirt, and said 'Yes—they come and go, but I've never gotten rid of them.' The two were comparing—they both had them—and a photographer walked by the dressing room door, saw this, and began snapping pictures. Elizabeth stood up, walked over, demanded he hand her the cam-





Grayson Hall in *Night of the Iguana* (1963)

era, opened it and pulled the film out, exposing it to the light. The red spots were a rather unpleasant infestation of, bugs, is the right term I guess—they would lay eggs, the eggs would hatch, they would lay more eggs, this was not the sort of problem Elizabeth Taylor and Grayson Hall were supposed to have, and Elizabeth made sure there would be no pictures.

"Mom was impressed by the fact that with friends, Elizabeth didn't care what people thought of her, and [that] confronted by a camera, she controlled it completely."

Burton, evidently, was also very fond of her, as he appears in a *Look* profile published in January 1964 telling her with tipsy bravado: "You, love, are unique. I mean when that camera is on you, the rest of us might as well not be there at all." As he tossed down tequilas, Grayson is said to have "blushed with a delight she would never forget," and Burton pressed on, asking her if he could rent one of the rooms in her vast apartment when he came to New York in 1964 to play *Hamlet*. One cast member neither Burton nor Grayson particularly warmed to was Sue Lyon, who showed up on set with her boyfriend, future screenwriter Hampton Fancher, III. The two of them would indulge in romantic play while the other actors were running through their takes, until Burton complained that Fancher made him "nervous" while Grayson informed Director John Huston, "I cannot act while those two lovers are necking in the corner! Here I am, trying to concentrate

on my lines, with the two of them going at it hot and heavy on the sofa! It's just too damned distracting!" As a result of the many complaints, Fancher was eventually banned from the set, much to Sue Lyon's distress.

On the night of the Academy Awards ceremony, Grayson asked John Huston frankly why he had cast her in the role of Judith Fellowes. With equal candour he responded, "I don't know. I thought you were a young Hepburn, and that was the quality I wanted."

An actress on the *Iguana* set with whom Grayson got on well was Ava Gardner, who informed her at one point between takes that, "I've been married to the same husband three times!" In a 1972 interview Grayson recalled, "One day we were shooting telephone scenes. Ava watched me do mine, and then asked me, 'How do you do that? It was just like someone was on the other end of the phone.' I told her how I imagined hearing this voice, and when she heard that, she shrieked, 'Oh, I can't do that! That's technique!' Then she ran down the hill and jumped into the ocean with all her clothes on."

Grayson's reviews praised the verisimilitude, vivacity, and verve of her acting in the role of Judith Fellowes. One reviewer, who was clearly acquainted with Grayson's stage work, commented in more thoughtful detail: "Miss Hall, one of the most uncontrolled actresses that off-Broadway has turned up, is kept in check by Huston. She overstates Miss Fellowes, but in a way that is effective and, on occasion, affecting. Her hysterical scene at the ocean's edge—Huston's invention—is the one moment that the film lifts from statement to action." More typical was the *Saturday Review's* praise of her "acid-etched portrait of a harassed tour leader," another critic's statement "Grayson Hall is unrelentingly bitchy" (as Miss Fellowes, one presumes!), and *Cue's* comment: "Grayson Hall gives an excellent characterisation of a bitter, hate-filled woman." The film was a considerable commercial success. Grayson's personal reaction to her own work was typically critical. In 1980, she told fan-magazine editor Melody

Clark: "I was never satisfied with any role I have ever played. I think I was dreadful on *Dark Shadows*. I was sick to my stomach when I saw myself in *Iguana*. Martha Graham has spoken of 'the divine discontent of the artist.' Well, let me tell you, it's not so divine... it's very painful... to always find yourself wanting... lacking." Still, it is remarkable, Grayson's own reservations notwithstanding, that out of all the stellar names lined up for the film, only she garnered an Academy Award nomination. When the nominations were announced, on February 24, 1965, she was caught unawares by paparazzi while browsing through an antique show at Madison Square Garden. With a quick-witted movement, she grabbed a venerable rifle and levelled it directly at the unsuspecting photographer—the star shooting the paparazzi. Elizabeth Taylor would doubtless have approved, though, in the event, Grayson did not find it necessary to confiscate the camera.

Though she did not, in the end, win an Oscar, the nomination was an auspicious beginning

Caught unawares by paparazzi at an antiques show, with a quick-witted movement, she grabbed a venerable rifle, aiming directly at the unsuspecting photographer

for 1965. Years later, asked whether she had hopes of winning, Grayson commented: "I never for one vague moment thought I had a chance, or deserved it... I never even made up a speech, so certain was I... and right." The statue went to Lila Kedrova, for her portrayal of Madame Hortense in Michael Cacoyannis' film *Zorba the Greek*. Other nominees in the category of Best Supporting Actress that year were Dame Edith Evans, Agnes Moorehead, and Gladys Cooper. Her first assignment that year was the rather unchallenging role of kidnapped bank teller Margaret Miller in a Disney film, *That Darn Cat*. Apparently there was some concern because Walt Disney himself asked to see a clip from Grayson's work in *Iguana* in lieu of a screen test. As fan-magazine editor Julia Collins noted, "She was told Disney would never hire her if he knew she played a lesbian. So they showed a clip from the film which just showed her screaming on the beach. About that, Disney didn't ask. 'Did you know he had a rocking chair with *Uncle Walt* written on the back?' laughs

Grayson. 'He came to watch us shoot one day, and I had no idea what to say to him. I asked him how he thought up Mickey Mouse, and he started telling his whole life story. And he kept coming back every day until he finished it.'" In a 1968 interview, the subject of the Disney film came up, and Grayson's comment was revealing: "That's what I got for being nominated for an Academy award—but I'm not knocking it. It was great fun to do."

While at Disney Studios, Grayson also did an uncredited stint performing a series of dramatic/comic voiceovers for a 1965 Halloween novelty LP, *Chilling, Thrilling Sounds of the Haunted House*. Disney's microphones caught some unusual registers of Grayson's voice (this writer likes to think of it as her 'story-telling' voice), but her unique sense of humour came through, especially in the excruciating incorrect Chinese water-torture segment, which ended with her babbling in 'Ching-Chong nonsense syllables, then pulling up short with the exclamation, "Wait a minute, I don't even speak Chi-

nese!" The *Haunted House* album took off like a rocket, and became a reliable holiday product for the Disney merchandising machine, which continued to issue new pressings of the al-





The world famous director Fellini had even considered designing an entire film around Grayson's face

bum well into the Seventies. It is ironic that this record, one of the most easily obtainable Grayson collectibles in used record shops around the US, does not even bear her name. Scattered fan reports even suggest that Grayson's voice can be heard as one of the characters in Disneyland's Haunted Mansion; the attraction opened in Anaheim in the mid Sixties, so it is possible that her voice was amongst those used, though is unconfirmed.

Her next assignment brought the whole family to Europe. Grayson had been cast in two one-act plays performed at the annual Festival of the Two Worlds in Spoleto, Italy. The plays were *A Slight Ache* by Harold Pinter and *The Adjustment* by critic and scholar Albert Bemel, which gave Grayson some sixteen pages of dialogue, rather in the vein of Cocteau's *Human Voice*. The Pinter play proved such a draw that extra performances had to be arranged, and the 1965 Festival itself, involving as it did public appearances by Ezra Pound, Yevtushenko, and other luminaries, drew heavy international media attention. This included extensive filming by America's NBC television network, which presented a vigorously promoted one-hour documentary about the Festival that fall. It is not known whether footage of Grayson onstage was included: if it were, the film would represent a unique record of her appearance onstage in the theatre, at a time when she was at the height of her powers.

After Spoleto, the family visited Rome and Venice (where carpaccio, an exotic dish involving thin-sliced medallions of raw beef, proved to be a favourite of Grayson's). She was soon travelling once again, this time to Hollywood, where she had her first really substantial appearance in a television program. The 52-minute colour film, *Back to Back*, was produced as an episode in the anthology series, *Bob Hope's Chrysler Theatre*. It cast her opposite Shelley Winters and Jack Hawkins, who played two people masquerading as a married couple seeking jobs at a very exclusive seaside resort presided over by Grayson Hall, in one of her most patrician roles.

The autumn of 1965 presented a moment of brief repose in Grayson's career. She had been nominated for an Oscar; she had

toured Europe; Fellini had even come to see her, and had spoken speculatively of designing an entire film around her face—Grayson of

the Spirits? At the same time, her work for the Disney Corporation and American television seemed to be pulling her in an opposite direction, one which would bring her more prominently into the lucrative world of the mass media and the commercial pop culture that was playing such a dominant role in the cultural upheavals of the Sixties. Given the fact that she was being pulled from such extreme polar opposites, it's perhaps not surprising that Grayson sought to return to the familiar world of off-Broadway theatre. In December of 1965 it was announced that she would shortly be returning from yet another visit to Europe to appear in two one-act Stanley Mann plays at Greenwich Village's esteemed Cherry Lane Theatre. As it turned out, her work in Europe kept her away too long to return to the safety of Greenwich Village. She spent the winter in Paris, chic, cultured and a little crazy, in the hothouse environment of the sets for American expatriate William Klein's controversial satire of French fashion and society, *Who are you, Polly Magoo?* From a personal point of view, making a movie entirely in French, in Paris, would prove her greatest challenge yet. ♦

Visit the Remembering Grayson Memorial Website:
<http://members.aol.com/lynn1dave/index.htm>

Top Ten Things Dark Shadows Taught the World...

10. Half-crouching behind an object renders one invisible to one's enemies.
9. A music box is the way to a woman's heart.
8. A dungeon laboratory is the ultimate in feminine accessories.
7. Three walls in a room is more than enough.
6. Lime green is perennially fashionable.
5. Carpet grass is maintenance-free.
4. Seances and Ching wands offer an economic alternative to expensive holidays.
3. Collinsport has the biggest red-light district in all of the English-speaking world.
2. A yo-yo serves as an excellent hypnosis aid and doubles as a fashionable pendant.

And the Number One Thing

Dark Shadows Taught the World:

1. One can never be too understated emotionally.

Terror Returned

Part Two

by Michelle Brook

The crimson red of a lightening sky bleeds upon the great estate of Collinwood, where one man faces a struggle with his darkest demons. For Angélique and Nicholas Blair have returned from the void, bringing with them the black gift of the curse. And now, returned to the burning fires of bloodlust, Barnabas Collins has attacked the most precious person in his life, his expectant wife Maggie...

As Maggie's body grew limp, Barnabas gripped her more firmly to him, as gently as his disorientation allowed. The bloodrage had consumed him, painting the entire sordid tableau a vivid red, and it seemed that there was nothing he could do to control his actions. A frantic dance of sensations and emotions waltzed through his mind—the coldness of his teeth on her skin, the burning metallic taste of her blood, hot in his mouth...

No! Stop it! He strained to make his conscience heard, yet any thought of ending the attack seemed to blur and fade almost immediately. The only voice he could hear was that of Maggie's frantic heartbeat, clouded in the dull wail of her pain. He tried to suppress the sound, but he found himself strangely numbed by its rhythmic, soothing sound. It echoed through his head like a mantra...

Feed... feed, feed... kill...

Through the crimson fog that clouded his mind, he wondered vaguely how Maggie could ever forgive him, when he could not even forgive himself.

Feed... feed, feed... kill...

As the warm trickle of her blood coursed through his veins, his strength slowly returned. But with it, came his more human senses. He was sickened by what he was doing, and yet aware that he could no more control it, than he could the barriers between day and night.

Feed... feed, feed... kill...

As he drank, his thirst lessened, his strength grew and he became aware of a second, less frantic heartbeat resounding in his ears. The echo of a slower beat could only belong to Maggie. The baby! He'd forgotten about the baby! The blood suddenly tasted more bitter.

Finally the Voice relinquished its grip, and the vampire side of his nature grudgingly gave way to more human thoughts. Breathing heavily,

Barnabas lifted his head and was horror-stricken to see the death-like paleness of Maggie's skin. With a gentleness that would not have been possible only seconds before, he lifted her limp form and carried it to a sofa. As he laid her down, her head lolled to one side, exposing the cruel puncture wounds, which stood out in stark relief against her pale skin. Blood slowly oozed across her throat. If it were not for the injuries evident on her neck, she would have looked like a child's porcelain doll, delicate and perfect. Barnabas knelt down beside the sofa. He stared at her motionless form, broken only occasionally by shallow, near invisible breaths. The paleness of her skin terrified him. Had he taken too much? He tried vainly to remember how long her and the baby's heartbeat had sounded in his ears.

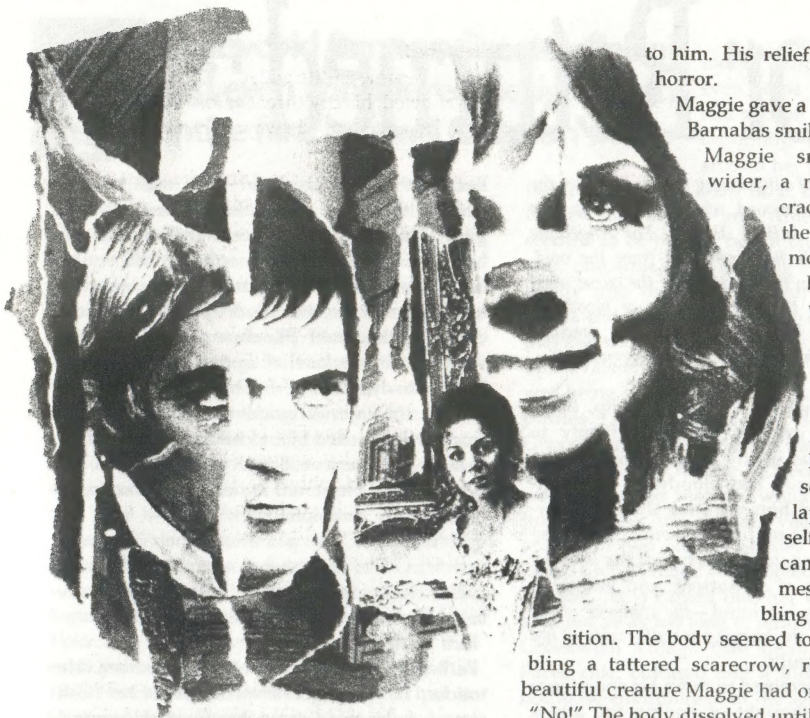
Feed... feed, feed... kill...

Perhaps it was better not to remember. He touched her grey face. The coolness of her flesh served only to increase his fears. His mind reeled at the possibility that he had succeeded not only in satiating his diabolical thirst, but in passing it on to Maggie. He banished the unpleasant thought away. But the stillness of her body and waxy pallor bothered him far more. A latticework of tiny veins could be seen beneath her skin, seemingly now paper-thin.

"Maggie?" he said hesitantly. There was no response. "Maggie?" he said again, this time a little louder. Only silence.

Panic seized him. "Maggie?" he said more urgently. When he still received no reply, he felt for a pulse... and found none.

"No!" he whispered hoarsely. It wasn't possible! Surely he had stayed within the limitations? What limitations, he thought numbly. There were no limitations for his kind. His face contorting with revulsion and grief, he lifted Maggie's head from where it lay, and pressing it close to his chest, buried his face in her hair. Though he was incapable of crying, his shoulders shook. He gently laid Maggie's head back on to a cushion. A final trickle of blood slowly danced down her neck, turning the fabric a dark red. His eyes riveted to the puncture wounds on her throat. Grief consumed him. He closed his eyes tightly, and clenched a fist against his mouth as a moan escaped him. But soon the sadness was over come by another,



more dangerous emotion. Anger.

Anger rose up in him. Anger at having let this happen. Anger at the irreversible situation he was now a part of. Maggie had sacrificed herself... and for what? He knew that in just a few short hours the terrible hunger would return... the need for fresh blood.

Why had he let her talk him into this? Why? But he knew why. Just as he knew it hadn't been her fault. Her love for him had made the sacrifice the only logical thing for her to do. She had been prepared to do anything. Perhaps the saddest part of her love had been the way it rendered her blind to the dangers he presented. But sacrifice had seemed necessary to her. Anything but see him suffer the turmoil of his existence. Now she had paid the price. They both had. Dearly.

Clenching his teeth against his savage rage, he leaned over her lifeless body and held it close to him, for one final time. As he released her, she let out a gentle sigh, the vaguest indications of a smile spreading across her face. He snapped his head to the left. "Maggie?" he asked hopefully. Thinking that perhaps it was only the drain on her blood and her own strength that had rendered her motionless, he pulled her closer to him. Yes... there was life. She must have been simply too weak to move or respond

to him. His relief soon turned to horror.

Maggie gave a beaming smile. Barnabas smiled back.

Maggie smiled a little wider, a number of tiny cracks appearing at the corners of her mouth.

Barnabas' eyes widened.

With disbelieving eyes, Barnabas watched in frozen horror as Maggie's body seemed to collapse within itself. The face became a tangled mess of flesh, bubbling with decomposition.

The body seemed to shrink, resembling a tattered scarecrow, rather than the beautiful creature Maggie had once been.

"No!" The body dissolved until only the skeleton remained. "No! Dear God, no!" he mewled, in horrified disbelief.

His eyes bulging, he could only watch in petrified terror. As the brittle bones of the skeleton dissolved into nothingness, Maggie Evans Collins was no more.

His paralysis broken he gave a terrified shriek of terror. And Angélique's mocking laughter filled the house...

He sat up with a jolt. "Maggie!" he cried in useless anguish. The room was in darkness, but a red glow in the sky warned of approaching dawn. His terrified eyes searched the room, finally coming to rest on the sofa.

It was empty.

He looked towards the stairs, wondering if he had awakened Maggie. Silence greeted him.

Barnabas paced through the room with slow deliberate steps. Blood stained the cushion. "No!" his mind yammered. "It was only a dream! A terrifying dream!"

Or was it? A hallucination? A vision of things to come, maybe?

Barnabas felt his fear returning. Through the open door, he could see movement near one of the pillars. A slender figure, outlined bleakly by the sky, cut through the shadows.

"Maggie? Is that you?" he asked hesitantly.

The figure stepped forward and Barnabas relaxed. "I heard you shout," said Maggie, offering a bright smile.

Overwhelmed with relief that it *had* been a dream, he collapsed on the sofa, and buried his head in his hands.

"Barnabas, what's wrong? Are you ill?" asked Maggie, stepping a little closer.

"It's nothing. Just a dream, that's all." he replied, almost to himself.

"Well Barnabas, we can't have that now," said Maggie, briskly, "You have responsibilities, obligations nowadays."

"Responsibilities?"

"Yes, responsibilities, and that would never do, now would it?" she concluded rhetorically.

"But... obligations?"

"Quite right, Barnabas," affirmed Maggie, seemingly oblivious to his confusion. "Or have you forgotten already?" she asked fussing around the other side of the room.

"Well, it's just that..."

"One must never forget one's responsibilities."

She fixed him with a stare. "Never."

Maggie ran a finger over the mantelpiece, methodically checking for dust.

She then moved into the darkness of the corner, shielding an indistinct patch of blackness.

It was then that he registered what Maggie was paying such special attention to. Wrapped in black, noxious lace was a baby's crib, suddenly bathed in jaundiced light.

"What is that, Maggie?" he croaked, in horrified fascination.

"Why, it's your Responsibility," said Maggie, frowning at his apparent ignorance. He attempted to step

closer, but she barred his way. "Can I look at it, Maggie?" he coaxed.

"Well, I'm not really sure."

"I'm sorry?"

"Maybe you can look at it," she frowned. "But you must be aware that if you accept a responsibility, you must be prepared to see it through," she replied curtly. "Now, are you prepared to do that, Barnabas?"

He frowned.

Her eyes became a little wider.

He swallowed, his dry throat sore. "Yes."

She smiled and stepped away. "Then of course you can look."

He looked down into the crib, where a fair-skinned child lay wrapped in black satin. It was the baby. It was his responsibility, and one that he would happily see through. "May I hold it?"

"It's *your* responsibility," answered Maggie.

Barnabas gave a thin smile, and gently lifted up the child. Its eyes shone red.

An identical mad light burned in Maggie's eyes, and her tone was mocking. "Are you so sure it was a dream?"

Barnabas looked up. The fear he had felt on waking returned. Icy fingers traced their way along his spine. He shivered. Maggie stepped nearer. Now he could see her face.

"No!" he whispered. "It was a dream!"

Feed... feed, feed... kill...

Maggie smiled, revealing two razor fangs. Her eyes smouldered with amber fury. "Haven't you realised that dreams can come true?"

She reached out, and pulled him to her. "No!" he begged. But his cries of terror were abruptly cut short, as Maggie buried her fangs into his throat. As the blackness threatened to overcome him, he heard Angélique's laughter of triumph. As her evil laughter faded away, Angélique appeared, smiling malevolently.

"When will you learn, dear Barnabas, that you will never escape me?"

As her voice drifted away, another shape began to take form. Nicholas grinned triumphantly. "My dear Barnabas, why fight? You know we get what we want in the end." ♦

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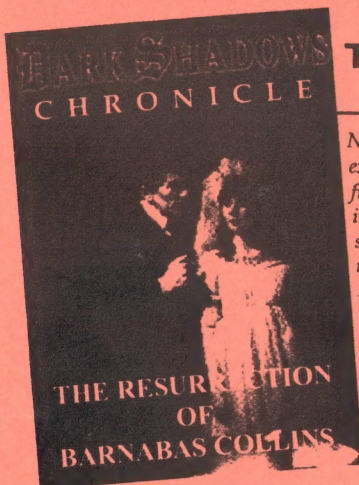
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